

Friday, 12 July, 2024  
10:00 AM  
Our Ref: PG:BB

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SOTS WELL POSITIONED FOR THE FUTURE**

Coonamble Shire Council provided a detailed update on its Coonamble main street *Sons of the Soil Hotel* project and proposed next steps at its July meeting.

Significant background work has been done on the *Sons of the Soil Hotel* (SOTS) project since the report and briefing in March 2024.

This work has involved obtaining heritage, structural, planning, and asbestos contamination reports, along with detailed costs for demolition and partial demolition.

Mayor Tim Horan said, "This report once again dispels all the myths and conspiracy theories that have been spread about the SOTS."

"I have consistently said that we do not have any information that the public does not have. This report documents all the work done so far and was made available publicly last Friday, at exactly the same time Councillors received it."

A 2010 Heritage Study of the Shire recommended 113 items for listing as local heritage items. Subsequently, the Coonamble Local Environmental Plan listed eight local heritage buildings, which did not include the SOTS.

The evaluation of the tenders received on the demolition and partial demolition options concluded that, in the absence of a demolition option being chosen, a decision on the preferred tenderer and contract award should not be made at this time. Council decided not to accept the tenders at this stage and not to proceed with any demolition.

While Council has never intended to be the actual developer, it has undertaken some preliminary investigations and discussions on possible options for the development of the SOTS site. Council is open to all options and has had preliminary discussions with prospective developers and investors.

A key focus of the next stage will be to engage a design consultant to draw up masterplan options and concept drawings for the site.

Work on securing funding will also be ramped up with grant applications.

The next phase of project work is to continue detailed market sounding of potential developers. This will test the appetite of the market to invest in the project.

General Manager Paul Gallagher said, "Council only bought this site in December 2023, and a significant amount of project development work has been done since. We have positioned the project well for the future and defined the key steps for its development."

Paul Gallagher  
**GENERAL MANAGER**