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PAM CLINCHES TOP CITY JOB

Picture:
FRANK CONNELL

Report:
MARK MULCAHY



● Cr Pam Stone after her election as the new Mayor of Wodonga.

CR PAM Stone yesterday became Wodonga's first woman Mayor.

She gained the top city job in a 5-4 vote against the Mayor for the past 12 months, Cr Les Boyes.

Her challenge for the position came as a surprise to many rate-payers, who expected Cr Boyes to serve a second term.

But Cr Stone, 56, and a councillor for nine years, had the necessary support to clinch the position.

Her election means that she has followed the footsteps of her late husband, Mr Les Stone, a former councillor and Wodonga's first Mayor.

He was elected to the Wodonga Shire Council in 1967 and became shire president in 1971.

Two years later he became Wodonga's first Mayor when the council was declared the Rural City of Wodonga.

He is regarded as having made an enormous contribution to the council, and was responsible for the introduction of the portfolio system that has operated successfully for many years.

Cr Stone has had an 18-year association with local government through her husband's involvement with the council.

She became a councillor in February, 1977, when elected in the West Ward and has been the council's planning committee chairman in recent years.

She stood for Greenhill Ward in the redistribution of council boundaries and was re-elected unopposed along with Cr Boyes and another former Mayor, Cr Harold Draper.

Four years ago she was elected to the position of deputy Mayor.

"It was not a sudden decision — this was my third attempt to be elected Mayor," Cr Stone said.

"Everyone around the table should have the opportunity to be Mayor."

"It is a learning experience."

Cr Stone said there was no animosity between herself and Cr Boyes.

"I congratulate him for his efforts during the past 12 months on behalf of the councillors and citizens."

"He carried out his duties with a nice, quiet dignity and was an excellent Mayor."

Cr Stone said her position as planning committee chairman gave her experience and insight.

"This is a vibrant and alive city," she said.

"We are really moving and will continue to do so."

Cr Stone will be the council's representative on the Albury Wodonga Development Corporation.

Family link as first woman mayor elected

She said she was looking forward to a good relationship with it.

"We have had access to the knowledge of their experts in various fields," Cr Stone said.

"The council has been working closer with the corporation in recent years."

"I hope we can work even closer with them."

"We have a common goal — to build Wodonga into a good place to live in."

Cr Stone has three children — Shane, 36, a Melbourne barrister; Terry, 28, a Wodonga concreter and Sue, who works for the Taxation Office.

Yesterday's statutory council meeting set the Mayor's allowance for the coming year was set at \$5,500.

Cr Boyes defeated Cr Barry Rogers in the poll for the position of deputy Mayor.

Councillors' allowances for the coming year were set at \$1500.

The election of Cr Stone as the Mayor is the second upset within the council this week.

On Saturday a former Mayor, and councillor for 12 years, Mr Rex Chamberlain was defeated in the council elections.

He lost his seat to another woman candidate, Mrs Valentina Gillard, in the Bonegilla Ward poll.

Mrs Gillard becomes the third woman on the 12-member council, and is the only new face after Saturday's election.