Two questions were submitted. The questions and answers are detailed below:

**Question one**

I refer to the redevelopment work approved to be carried out at Kelly park. Specifically the removal of the pine trees at the southern boundary. I was bemused to see that workers have been on site horizontally boring under the line of trees to lay conduit along the nature strip, directly through the root systems of the trees. When questioned the workers stated that they had waited almost three months for approval, and removal of the trees would almost certainly require the work to be re-done, following up with "Oh well, I guess they'll pay us to do it again after they've finished." Why was this work approved with the removal of the trees imminent or has there been a change to the plan for the work schedule at Kelly park?

**Answer one**

I refer to your recent question put to the Council meeting of 20 July 2020.

While the Wodonga Chief Executive Officer, Mr Mark Dixon responded to the enquiry on the night, I thought it useful to provide you a very brief written response.

The works described in your email are works undertaken by NBN and/or their appointed contractors – not the Wodonga Council.

The works were first mooted in November 2019 when council staff were advised of a NBN Land Access and Activity Notice. Initially, their plans were to open trench the works – this not being permitted by us due to the likely impact on the root systems of the street trees (pines) in that location.

Council staff never supervised the works so are unable to comment on any damage to the tree roots – although such damage has not yet become apparent.

We are also unable to comment on any remarks by the contractors engaged by others.

Finally, the works are unrelated to the proposed replacement works to the Lawrence Street Bridge, or the proposed future reconstruction of Lawrence Street or the repeated requests for the removal of the pine trees along Lawrence Street. Apart from the bridge works, the latter two projects are not approved or programmed at this time.
Question two

I refer to the recently signed, long awaited regional deal. I have attended or watched online council meetings over the last two years, in this time I have not seen any resolution outlining the details of this deal and authorising the signing of same. Was a resolution passed in camera, if so why, was it done through officer delegation by the CEO or others, or was the decision made by the Mayor alone to sign without council input and approval, and what are the consequences of signing without resolution? Surely we don't live in a totalitarian autocracy where the leader can do whatever they choose with no recourse to the citizens and council as a whole.

Answer two

Thank you for your question to the council meeting of 20 July 2020 about the Regional Deal.

As you may be aware your question was read out at last night’s council meeting and the CEO, Mark Dixon, responded.

His response emphasised that the Regional Deal has been developed over many months and, until now, council’s attention has focussed on getting all deal partners (Federal Government, VIC Government, NSW Government, Albury Council and Wodonga Council) to agree to (and sign) a statement of intent. This signing was largely symbolic and ceremonial in nature and importantly it does not commit the council (or community) to anything. It is entirely appropriate for the Mayor to perform this ceremonial role.

The next steps in this lengthy process will involve considerable planning and consultation, with many business and community stakeholders, to determine what the Regional Deal will look like and what commitments are needed by the various deal partners - at each level of government. Any decisions that impact Wodonga’s community and/or council would come before council with a resolution for a determination by the council.

Importantly, the Regional Deal is an opportunity for our communities to access significant Federal and State funding to help Wodonga to transform and grow.