

### **Soldier on the Monument to return.**

On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021 a long combination vehicle attempted to negotiate a right hand turn from Fox street onto Wee Waa Street, unfortunately things didn't go as planned, the trailer collided with the base of the War Memorial Monument. The soldier that has watched over the towns centre for almost a century was dislodged from the base along with the plinth, the soldier suffered unreparable damage.

Council's General Manager Mike Urquhart advised a structural engineer from Dubbo had inspected the monument in August 2021, reporting the base and plinth were structurally sound as damage was merely aesthetic in nature.

The next step in the restoration process was insurer approval to carry out repair of the secondary plinth and sculpting of the soldier. The General Manger said discussions were had with a number of sculptors and it was decided the renowned sculptor, Carl Valerius be engaged to recreate the soldier on the monument.

Carl Valerius is a nationally recognized sculptor working with bronze, stone and wax and soft materials in between. Carl has no formal qualifications, instead his artistic life has been derived from skills he has developed for essential survival as a stonemason and builder. His lack of formal training has not prevented him from being an invited guest lecturer at the University of New South Wales.

If you have been to Darling Harbour, Sydney you will have seen Carl's work, likewise Canberra's National Museum has his work on permanent display. Other work includes Sir Donald Bradman and the design of the Captain's Walk, Cootamundra Jubilee Park and Bradman's Cottage. His most recent and significant work was produced in 2020, a life size bronze statue of "Bill the Bastard", Australia's greatest warhorse depicted in ABC's Landline. The statue is on display on the Riverina town of Harden-Murrumburrah.

The General Manager said Carl has since completed a mold of the soldier and ordered the marble from Italy. With delays in the supply chain, Carl was unable to meet his original planned unveiling day 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the revised date for completion is now 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

An official unveiling event will be arranged for later in the year.