

# Fit For The Future Questionnaire

Please provide us with your response:

1. Do you live in:  
 Jerilderie town  
 Rural area
2. Are you a:  
 Ratepayer  
 Resident  
 Business owner  
 Local Government employee
3. i) My preferred option is:  
 Rural Council  
 Merge with Murrumbidgee Shire Council  
ii) Why did you choose this option?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What would you see as the major advantages in a merge with Murrumbidgee Shire:  
 It will unify our region  
 Less bureaucracy / more service delivery  
 Fewer Councillors  
 Increased Council capability  
 None / can't think of any  
 Other  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What would you see as the major disadvantages in a merge with Murrumbidgee Shire:  
 Further increases in rates  
 Competition between 3 towns  
 Watered down representation  
 Loss of local identity  
 Reduction in volunteering / community involvement  
 None / can't think of any  
 Other  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## JERILDERIE SHIRE COUNCIL AS A RURAL COUNCIL

6. Envisage decreased number of Councillors to 5:  
 Agree  
 Disagree
7. Strengths  
 High quality assets  
 Efficient service delivery  
 Low levels of bureaucracy  
 Others?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Weaknesses  
 Financially vulnerable  
 Grant dependant  
 Ability to attract suitably qualified staff  
 Others?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Would you like to be given more information on the options available?  
 Yes  
 No
10. What are the best two ways for Council to communicate with you?  
 Newspaper  
 Letter drop  
 Website  
 Facebook  
 Mayor's Column  
 Community Meetings  
 Email

Email address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have any further comments?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and return questionnaire to Jerilderie Shire Council by 5.00pm on Monday 8 June 2015:

By post: PO Box 96  
JERILDERIE 2716  
35 Jerilderie Street  
JERILDERIE 2716

Email: [mail@jerilderie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@jerilderie.nsw.gov.au)

Fax: 03 5886 1701

Jerilderie Shire Council 35 Jerilderie Street 03 5886 1200

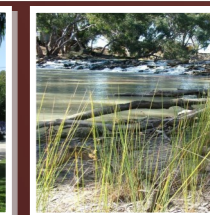
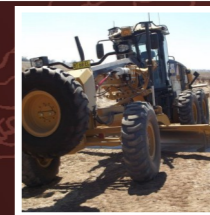


FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Newsletter

# Jerilderie Shire

June 2015



What is

Fit For The Future?

The Independent Local Government Review Panel (ILGRP) was established in April 2012 to examine the options for establishing a stronger and more effective system of Local Government within NSW. The Panel produced its final report in October 2013. The report made a series of recommendations covering areas such as:

- \* Financial responsibility
- \* Strengthening the revenue base
- \* Meeting infrastructure needs
- \* Improvement, productivity and accountability
- \* Political leadership and good governance
- \* Advancing structural reform; and
- \* State - Local Government relations.

When considering Jerilderie Shire Council, the ILGRP recommended the following options:

- \* Merge with Berrigan Shire Council (as a preference)
- \* Remain a Rural Council, with improvements to achieve sustainability into the future

Fit for the Future is an initiative that was launched by the NSW State Government in September 2014 to reform the Local Government sector. It is the culmination of three (3) years of consultation between the NSW State Government and the Local Government sector to look at a wide range of reforms to Councils within NSW to help place them on a sustainable footing into the future.

The Fit for the Future program requires all Councils in NSW to submit their proposal to the Minister for Local Government by 30 June 2015, which will be assessed by IPART who will make recommendations to the Minister for Local Government for final implementation.

## Message from the Mayor

As finalisation of the detail for our Council's "Fit For The Future" proposal draws near, the available options for Council have narrowed.

Council has worked diligently, exploring the Independent Local Government Review Panel's two options, and other possibilities with our neighbours.

We participated in a Business Case with Berrigan Shire to flesh out whether this recommendation would provide the increased scale and capacity, to place us in a stronger position. Berrigan Shire's decision to pursue a stand alone improvement path means this option cannot be pursued.

We reached agreement with Murrumbidgee Shire to undertake a Business Case for a merger, the result of which should be made available to us by 5 June 2015.

The second recommendation of the Review Panel was to become a Rural Council, which means effectively we continue on as is with the use of innovative cost cutting and ramping up and promoting any opportunities for income increasing activities. We believe that we have the mindset, willingness and capacity to make this happen. We have for some years provided capacity in Environmental and Technical Services to neighbouring Councils, and we see opportunity to expand this. We have been proactively identifying assets that are unused for disposal, and have for some period of time been streamlining our administration activities. A reduction in the number of Councillors is a real option.

The Review Panel was keen to identify just how well we network and resource share. Jerilderie Shire has a demonstrated history of doing just this and we have been aware that we not only don't have the financial capability to have every resource under our roof we don't have the ability to attract that required Human Resource. Existing examples of this are our Library Service and our Rural Fire Service.

During all of our deliberations we have always had three imperatives that we have had squarely in our vision:

1. We will embrace change as long as the level of service we now expect and enjoy is not diminished, and costs don't increase;
2. We have minimal interruption to our workforce and we are able to retain as many jobs as possible;
3. Fair and equitable representation is a must. Our Community must be confident that they will still have a voice.

Be assured that your elected representatives and your Management and Operational Staff continue to work hard to place Jerilderie Shire in the best position possible, given that undoubtedly some restructure and change is inevitable.

Cr Ruth McRae  
MAYOR



Jerilderie Shire Council 35 Jerilderie Street 03 5886 1200

# “Have Your Say”

## INVITATION TO ATTEND A PUBLIC MEETING / INFORMATION SESSION

Ratepayers and residents are invited to attend a Public Meeting / Information Session to be held in the Ian Gilbert Room of the Jerilderie Civic Hall on Wednesday evening 10 June 2015, commencing 7.00pm.

At this meeting, Council will present to the community details of its preferences for presentation to the Minister for Local Government by 30 June 2015.

Council is required to use the recommendations from the October 2013 Report by the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel “Revitalising Local Government”.

The Report recommends a merger with Berrigan Shire Council (as a preference) or a Rural Council in a Mid Murray Joint Organisation of Councils.

Berrigan Shire Council carried out a business case for its future, which concludes there is little value in a merger with Jerilderie Shire Council.

A business case for a merger with Murrumbidgee Shire Council, the only other neighbouring Council willing to consider a merger option, is being prepared, and is expected to be available early June.

The findings of this business case will be presented to the meeting.

This presentation will also include details of the Delivery Program 2015-2019 and Operational Plan 2015-2016.

Council encourages your attendance at the public meeting, which will provide detailed information and input into the options available, and an opportunity to indicate your preference.

The questionnaire which forms part of this newsletter will provide you with the opportunity to record your preference, and make comment on the future of Local Government in Jerilderie.

## WHAT HAS COUNCIL DONE SO FAR?

Councils are required to commence with the preferred option provided in the Final Report of the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel, “Revitalising Local Government” when preparing their submission to the Minister for Local Government on how we will be fit for the future, in our case a merge with Berrigan Shire or to become a Rural Council.

We have discussed all combination of other merger options, both with our neighbours and beyond in larger groupings. The result is that there is no appetite for merger consideration, other than to look more closely at a merger with Murrumbidgee Shire Council.

This business case is being prepared and will be completed in time for presentation to the public meeting on Wednesday 10 June, 2015 in the Ian Gilbert Room. Without predicting the outcome of that work, it is clear that merging two small Councils very similar in size does little to create viability, with a larger population base being recognised as a key ingredient of any merger.

The Rural Council template is the most likely option to be pursued, and can be described as continuing on as we are, with an emphasis on sourcing more and more support services regionally through the Joint Organisation of Councils, and growing own source income by expanding our provision of services to our neighbours and carrying out more engineering asset maintenance and renewal for Roads and Maritime Services and Rural Fire Services regionally. Council's track record over many years has demonstrated an ability and willingness to explore all available options to grow own source income.

*Craig Moffitt*  
**General Manager**

# Jerilderie's Options...

## MERGE WITH A NEIGHBOURING COUNCIL

The first - and preferred - option from the Independent Local Government Review Panel was for Jerilderie Shire Council to merge with Berrigan Shire Council.

Berrigan Shire Council chose to prepare a stand alone business case which explored the possible merger of Jerilderie and Berrigan Shires. This business case concluded that there is little benefit in this merger. Berrigan Shire Council has chosen the option to stand alone as their way forward.

## REMAIN AS A STAND ALONE “RURAL COUNCIL”

The other option is for Jerilderie Shire Council to become a “Rural Council” in a Mid Murray Joint Organisation of Councils. As part of the Fit for the Future process, Councils must be able to demonstrate scale and capacity to deliver services to their communities.

For those Councils identified as having the option of becoming a Rural Council, there are options to build capacity by refocussing Council's activities and exploring new ways of working.

Rural Councils are those that meet most, if not all of the following characteristics, being that they have:-

- \* A small and static or declining population spread over a large area;
- \* Local economies that are based on agricultural/resource industries;
- \* High operating costs associated with a dispersed population and limited opportunities for return on investment;
- \* High importance of retaining local identity, social capacity and capacity for service delivery;
- \* Low rate base and high grant reliance;
- \* Challenges in financial sustainability and provision of adequate services and infrastructure
- \* Long distance to a major (or sub) regional centre
- \* Limited options for merger

Rural Councils can also look at a number of options to assist them to prepare a Fit for the Future business case. These options include resource and services sharing, providing specialist services, streamlining processes such as governance and planning, and undertaking a review of services. There is encouragement to minimise the number of Councillors.

Should Jerilderie Shire Council determine that it wishes to stand alone as a Rural Council, details of what actions are proposed will be included in Council's submission to the Minister for Local Government.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF A COUNCIL DOES NOTHING?

If a Council doesn't submit a proposal, then it will be deemed to be not fit, therefore being denied access to incentives:

- \* Streamlined IPART process for rate increases above the rate pegging limit, particularly focussed on infrastructure funding needs, making it easier for Councils to increase rates to fund services and infrastructure the community has said it wants and is willing to pay for;
- \* T-Corp borrowing facility that will save NSW Councils up to \$600 million on the cost of borrowing, helping them to fund the crucial infrastructure that communities need;
- \* Priority access to other State funding and grants; and
- \* Eligibility for additional devolved planning powers in relation to the making of local environmental plans and development decisions, and opportunities for devolving further planning powers;

These incentives are only available to those Councils who have demonstrated they are fit for the future, and have IPART and the Minister for Local Government's agreement.

