



MEDIA RELEASE

26 March 2015

The Future of Lockhart Shire Council

At its March Council Meeting, Council made one of its most important decisions for the future of the shire. That decision was to remain independent and stand alone as a Rural Council rather than risk the uncertainty and turbulence associated with merging with a neighbour, when it can't be demonstrated that any financial gains or other benefits will result from such a union.

Mayor Peter Yates said, "Council and its community has staunchly maintained its will to remain independent and has chosen to stand alone as a Rural Council rather than amalgamate with one or another of our neighbours. The option chosen is the preferred option for our Council announced by the Independent Local Government Review Panel in its Final Report to the NSW Government".

Councillor Yates' comments follow several months of discussion between Councillors and consultation with our various neighbours locally. The same discussions have been occurring all over the State as Councils prepare their responses to the NSW Government's Fit For the Future Program which requires Councils to demonstrate their ability to remain sustainable into the long term future. Submissions from each Council are required to be lodged by 30 June 2015.

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“Now that Council has made that decision”, Councillor Yates continued, “a series of public meetings will be held to explain the reasons for the decision and gain the support of our various community’s for the measures required to be put in place to enable retention of our independence.”

He added, “Although Council’s finances are in a healthy state, the revenue raised from our own resources is quite low compared to where the State Government contends it should be, and in order to be Fit For the Future, that amount needs to rise over time. This will mean that among other measures, our rate income generated will need to rise by more than the normal CPI increases. Some modest rate increases will be one of the important issues discussed with our community at our public meetings”.

The public meetings will take place in mid-April and will be held in The Rock, Yerong Creek, Lockhart, Pleasant Hills and Osborne. Details will be supplied closer to the dates.

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