

# JERILDERIE SHIRE COUNCIL – RURAL COUNCIL PROPOSAL

## NOT FIT

Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	3,352	Population: 2011	1,550
OLG Group	8	(2031)	1,250
ILGRP Group	B	Merger 2011	9,850
		(2031)	9,050
Operating revenue (2013-14)	\$6.5m	TCorp assessment	Moderate FSR Negative Outlook



ILGRP options (preference in bold)  
**Merge with Berrigan** (yellow) or Rural Council in Mid-Murray JO (all shaded).

Assessment summary	Scale and capacity	<b>Does not satisfy</b>
	Financial criteria:	<b>Does not satisfy overall</b>
	• Sustainability	Does not satisfy
	• Infrastructure and service management	Satisfies
	• Efficiency	Does not satisfy

### Fit for the Future – NOT FIT

- The council does not satisfy the scale and capacity criterion.
- Scale and capacity is a threshold criterion which councils must meet to be Fit for the Future (FFTF), therefore the council is not fit.
- The council does not satisfy the financial criteria overall. Although it satisfies the infrastructure and service management criterion, it does not satisfy the sustainability and efficiency criteria.
- The council does not satisfy the sustainability criterion based on its forecast for continuing operating deficits.
- We consider the operating performance ratio benchmark is a key measure of financial sustainability that all FFTF councils should meet, therefore the council is not fit.

### Scale and capacity– does not satisfy

- The council was required to consider the ILGRP preferred option and demonstrate its proposal is as good an option to achieve the scale and capacity objectives for the region.
- The proposed Rural Council Proposal is not as good as the ILGRP's preferred option to merge with Berrigan. When compared to the merger, the council's small and declining population of 1,250 in 2031 means it is unlikely to cost-effectively provide services to the local communities.
- The council submitted a business case assessing the costs and benefits of merging Jerilderie with Berrigan. The business case showed the merger of Jerilderie and Berrigan could deliver benefits to the local community of between \$1.4m and \$12.5m over 10 years (using a discount rate of 5.5%, not including the \$5m Government funding).

### Sustainability – does not satisfy

- The council does not satisfy the criterion for sustainability based on its continuing operating deficit. The operating performance ratio was -11.5% in 2014-15 and is forecast to reach -5.7% by 2024-25, which is below the benchmark of break-even.
- The council's figures include a previously approved and adopted special variation of 21.0% over 2 years from 2015-16 (15% above the rate peg).
- The council's own source revenue ratio was 49.1% in 2014-15 and is forecast to reach 52.0% by 2019-20 without the inclusion of FAGs, which is below the benchmark. The inclusion of FAGs increases the ratio to 80.7% by 2019-20.
- The building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio was 74.2% in 2014-15 and is forecast to reach 97.2% by 2019-20. This is close to the benchmark of 100%.

### Infrastructure and service management - satisfies

- The council satisfies the infrastructure and service management criterion. It is forecast to meet the benchmark for the infrastructure backlog, asset maintenance and debt service ratios over the outlook period to 2019-20.

### Efficiency – does not satisfy

- The council does not meet the criterion for efficiency based on its forecast to maintain its level of service for a declining population. Real opex per capita was \$5,170 in 2014-15 and is forecast to be \$5,580 in 2019-20.
- The increase in real opex per capita is 8% over the period, compared with a forecast decline in population of 1.2% over the same period.

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### Other relevant factors

Social and community context	While Jerilderie and Berrigan are both agricultural areas, the councils maintain there are differences in their respective focus. Berrigan considers its orientation is to the south of the Murray River, ie, towards Victoria. Berrigan states it collaborates with the Victorian municipality of Moira on tourism and for shared services. Jerilderie has a low rates base which is further impacted by population decline. Berrigan considers its rates base is stronger due to a steady population and increasing property values. It considers this may have implications for rates harmonisation in a merger. Jerilderie is the main town in the Jerilderie LGA and is surrounded by farmland. We note that most of Berrigan and Jerilderie's boundaries would be accessible from Berrigan within 90 minutes.
Community consultation	The council consulted the community over two years in conjunction with its special variation application consultation. It used newsletters, questionnaires, public meetings, Mayoral Columns, newspaper articles and media releases to engage with the community. In general the majority of the community voted for the council to submit a Rural Council Proposal.
Water and/or sewer	The council does not meet all the requirements of the NSW Best Practice Management framework. A section 64 Development Servicing Plan is not in place as there is no new development in the township. It notes with less than 400 residential and 100 non-residential assessments, the ability to obtain the required usage criteria is limited. The Fund is showing a diminishing deficit over the next 10 years which is to be addressed by a 5% annual increase in fees and charges with a review on depreciation. The council will also conduct a service delivery and administrative cost review which it states will remove the deficit earlier than currently predicted. It reports it has no water and sewerage infrastructure backlog.
Submissions	There were no submissions received in relation to Jerilderie's proposal.

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