



Oberon Council would you like to invite all the community to attend a

## Community Information Session

# **FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

**Robert (Bob) Hooper Community Centre**

**Thursday 23 April 2015, 5.30pm**

The Fit for the Future process is the NSW Government's response to the final reports by the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the Local Government Acts Taskforce. Each Council in NSW is required to review its situation, and prepare a Fit for the Future submission by 30 June 2015 which demonstrates Council's scale and capacity to meet the challenges ahead.



[www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au)

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION

Thursday 23 April 2015

at the Robert (Bob) Hooper Community Centre, Oberon



AGENDA, & HOUSEKEEPING

INTRODUCTIONS & PRESENTATIONS

QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

### PRESENTATIONS

- Background to the Fit for the Future Reform process
- Why is Reform necessary?
- What is the Fit for the Future Reform “Package”?
- What is Oberon Council’s approach at this time?
- What will our Fit for the Future proposal be?
- Does this change how Oberon Council works?

## OBERON COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2014

### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

OUR COMMUNITY
BASIC SERVICES
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY
RESPONSIVE and CARING
OPEN COMMUNICATION
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### OUTCOMES & ACTIONS

There are specific Actions which the Council will review with the community in May and June each year when an Operational Plan and Budget is determined for the next financial year commencing in July.

We will be visiting Black Springs, Burruga, and O'Connell plus attend two meetings in Oberon.

### QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

NSW Govt response to final reports by Panel & Taskforce  
*with a dedicated website* [www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au)

Make a SUBMISSION / FEEDBACK by email to:

[council@oberon.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@oberon.nsw.gov.au) or

PO Box 84  
Oberon NSW 2787



# COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION FIT FOR THE FUTURE

AGENDA, & HOUSEKEEPING  
INTRODUCTIONS & PRESENTATIONS  
QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

## PRESENTATIONS

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- 1 Background to the Fit for the Future Reform process
- 2 Why is Reform necessary?
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Fit for the Future



OBERON COUNCIL

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Fit for the Future

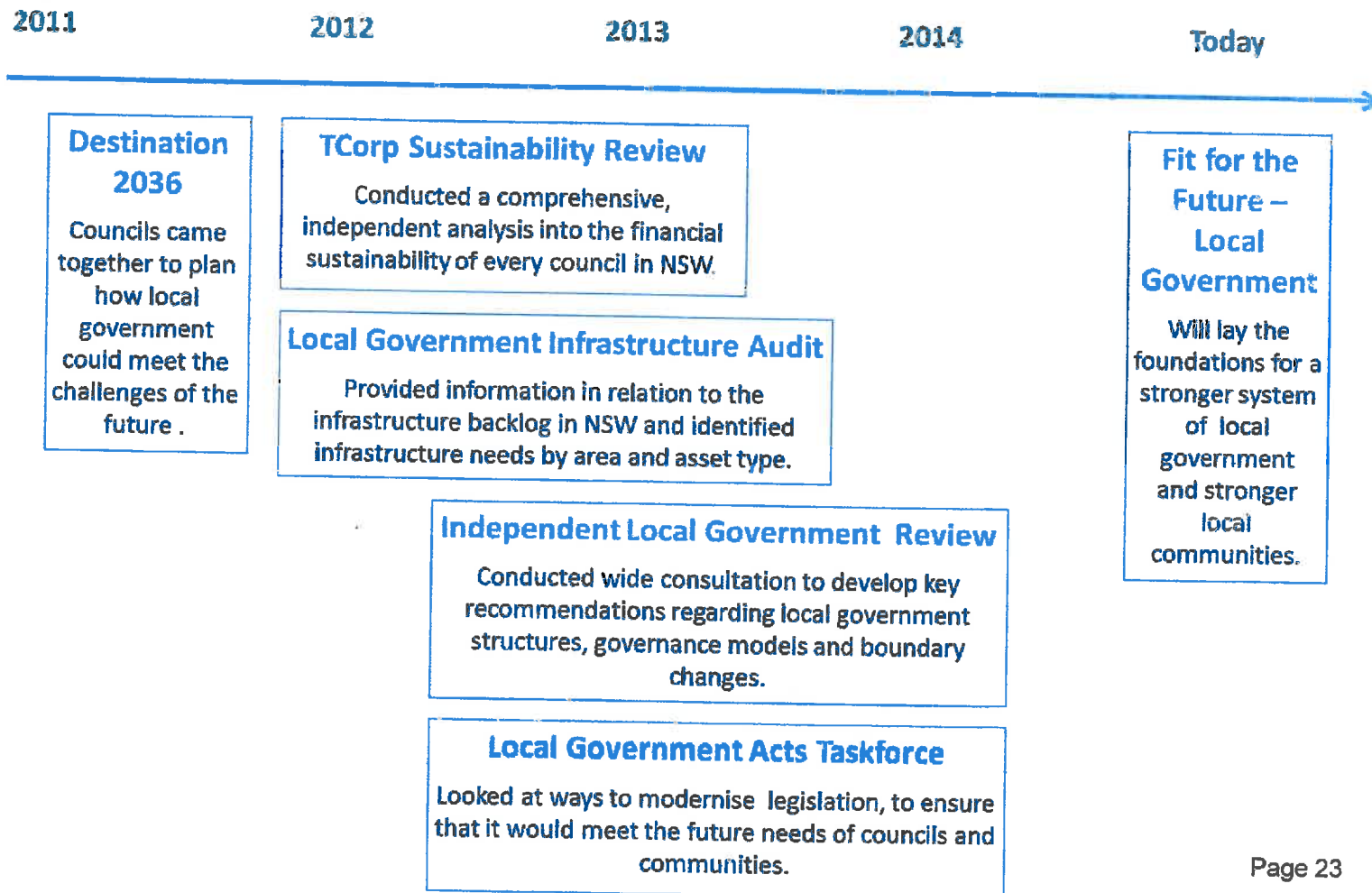


[www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au)



# Where have we come from?

## The journey so far...



#### 1.4 Overall Results

Table 1 below provides the current FSR distribution of the 152 Councils in NSW as determined by TCorp's assessment process.

The results show that 113 (74.3%) of the 152 Councils are currently rated Moderate or better, and 39 (25.7%) are rated Weak or Very Weak. A Moderate rating indicates that a Council has an adequate capacity to meet its financial obligations in the short to medium term (being the next five years), and to manage risks to its business. A Council rated as Moderate is likely to have recorded some minor to moderate operating deficits and it may have also recently recorded a significant operating deficit. It is likely to be able to address any unforeseen financial shocks with moderate revenue and/or expense adjustments. Achieving a Moderate level FSR is considered to be the base target level for Councils and those Councils with a FSR higher than Moderate are in a much stronger position to deliver services, manage their assets and risks and address their Infrastructure Backlogs. Councils rated as Moderate will generally not have sufficient funds to address their Infrastructure Backlogs.

No Councils were assigned an FSR of Very Strong or Distressed.

Table 1 - FSR Distribution

Rating	Count	Percentage
Very Strong	0	0.0%
Strong	2	1.3%
Sound	32	21.1%
Moderate	79	52.0%
Weak	34	22.4%
Very Weak	5	3.3%
Distressed	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The map in section 4.1 shows the geographic distribution of the assessed FSR for each Council.

TCorp also prepared an Outlook rating for each Council based on the perception of the likely future movement in the FSR rating of each Council. The Outlooks were assigned based on TCorp's view of the likely movement (if any) of a Council's FSR rating over the next three years.

The Outlooks determined are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2 - Outlook Distribution

Outlook	Count	Percentage
Positive	5	3.3%
Neutral	74	48.7%
Negative	73	48.0%



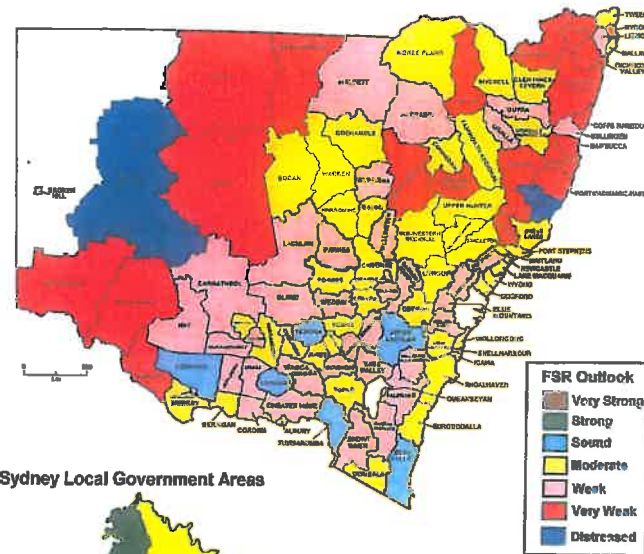
New South Wales  
Treasury Corporation

- There is a much higher percentage of Rural Councils (32.4%) which TCorp considers to be Weak or Very Weak compared to Urban Councils (19.8%)
- Based solely on their FSR, no Councils were rated as either Very Strong or Distressed
- One Urban Council has a Strong FSR with a Positive Outlook and TCorp would expect that Council to achieve a Very Strong rating within the next few years. Two Rural Councils are rated Very Weak with a Negative Outlook both these Councils are expected to have a Distressed rating within the next few years

The map below shows the regional distribution of this FSR overlay analysis. When compared with the previous map in section 4.1, more Councils are in the Weak or worse FSR category.

Graph 11 – FSR Overlay Maps

## NSW Local Government Areas



Sydney Local Government Areas



Sydney Urban Local Government Areas





# Becoming Fit for the Future

Do you have the right scale and capacity?

- Starting point is the recommendations from the Independent Local Government Review Panel in relation to mergers and Rural Councils

**If Yes**

## Roadmap to address other criteria

- Sustainability
- Efficiency
- Effective Infrastructure and Service Management

**If No**

## Structural Change Roadmap

- Broadly consistent with the recommendations of the Panel

# Fit for the Future



## **\$258m**

To help councils who have decided to merge to make the transition and provide services and facilities communities need.

## **\$13m**

To support local transition committees and ensure elected representatives are involved in the merger process.

## **\$5.3m**

To get new regional Joint Organisations up and running.

## **\$4m**

To help small councils (<10,000 population) develop innovative ways of working.

## **Up to \$600m**

Potential savings from cheaper finance for Fit for the Future councils to invest in local infrastructure.

## **Up to \$100m**

Reductions in red tape and duplication will save councils up to \$100m.



## **Expert assistance**

Funding for experts to help merging councils explore the options and prepare a sound business case.

## **One stop shop**

Access to the Office of Local Government's One Stop Shop for local government reform, including a regional relationship manager who understands your area.

## **Facilitators**

Access to fully-funded professional facilitators who can help councils begin discussions about how to merge and the benefits for their community.

## **Technical support**

Access to a team of technical experts to help prepare your Fit for the Future proposal.

## What's on offer for Councils?

## Up to \$1 billion reform package.

# Becoming Fit for the Future

Criteria and benchmarks for being Fit



SUSTAINABILITY

- Operating Performance Ratio (greater or equal to break-even average over 3 years)
- Own Source Revenue Ratio (greater than 60% average over 3 years)
- Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio (greater than 100% average over 3 years)



EFFECTIVE  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
SERVICE MANAGEMENT

- Infrastructure Backlog Ratio (less than 2%)
- Asset Maintenance Ratio (greater than 100% average over 3 years)
- Debt Service Ratio (greater than 0 and less than or equal to 20% average over 3 years)



EFFICIENCY

- Real Operating Expenditure per capita over time

## How were the criteria and measures developed?

Fit for the Future

TCorp analysis & recommendations

Accounting Code

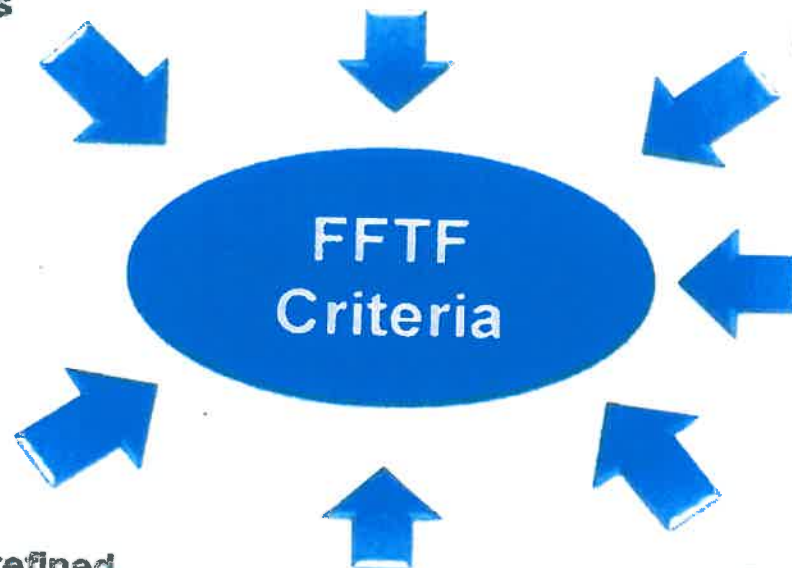
Infrastructure audit

Independent Panel research and recommendations

Some criteria refined following review and recommendations from IPART

Input from OLG and specialist consultants

Some TCorp calculations refined following input from LG sector



# Why were these measures chosen?

## Sustainability

Operating Performance Ratio	Core measure of financial sustainability – indicates Council's capacity to meet ongoing operating expenditure requirements.
Own Source Revenue	<p>Councils with higher own source revenue have greater ability to control their own operating performance and financial sustainability.</p> <p><b>Benchmark:</b> TCorp recommended 60% as the minimum level to ensure Council's have sufficient flexibility to manage external shocks and challenges.</p>
Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio	<p>Measures whether Council's assets are deteriorating faster than they are being renewed – indicator of whether Council's infrastructure backlog is likely to increase.</p> <p><b>Benchmark:</b> Ratio of greater than 100% ensures community assets are managed in a sustainable way.</p>

# Why were these measures chosen?

## Infrastructure and service management

**Infrastructure Backlog Ratio** Measures how effectively Council's are managing their infrastructure. Increasing backlogs may affect Council's ability to provide services and remain sustainable.

**Benchmark:** The benchmark of less than 2% ensures infrastructure backlogs are at manageable levels.

**Asset Maintenance Ratio** Measures whether Council is spending enough on maintaining its assets to avoid increasing its infrastructure backlog.

**Benchmark** A ratio of greater than 100% ensures Council's infrastructure position is not deteriorating.

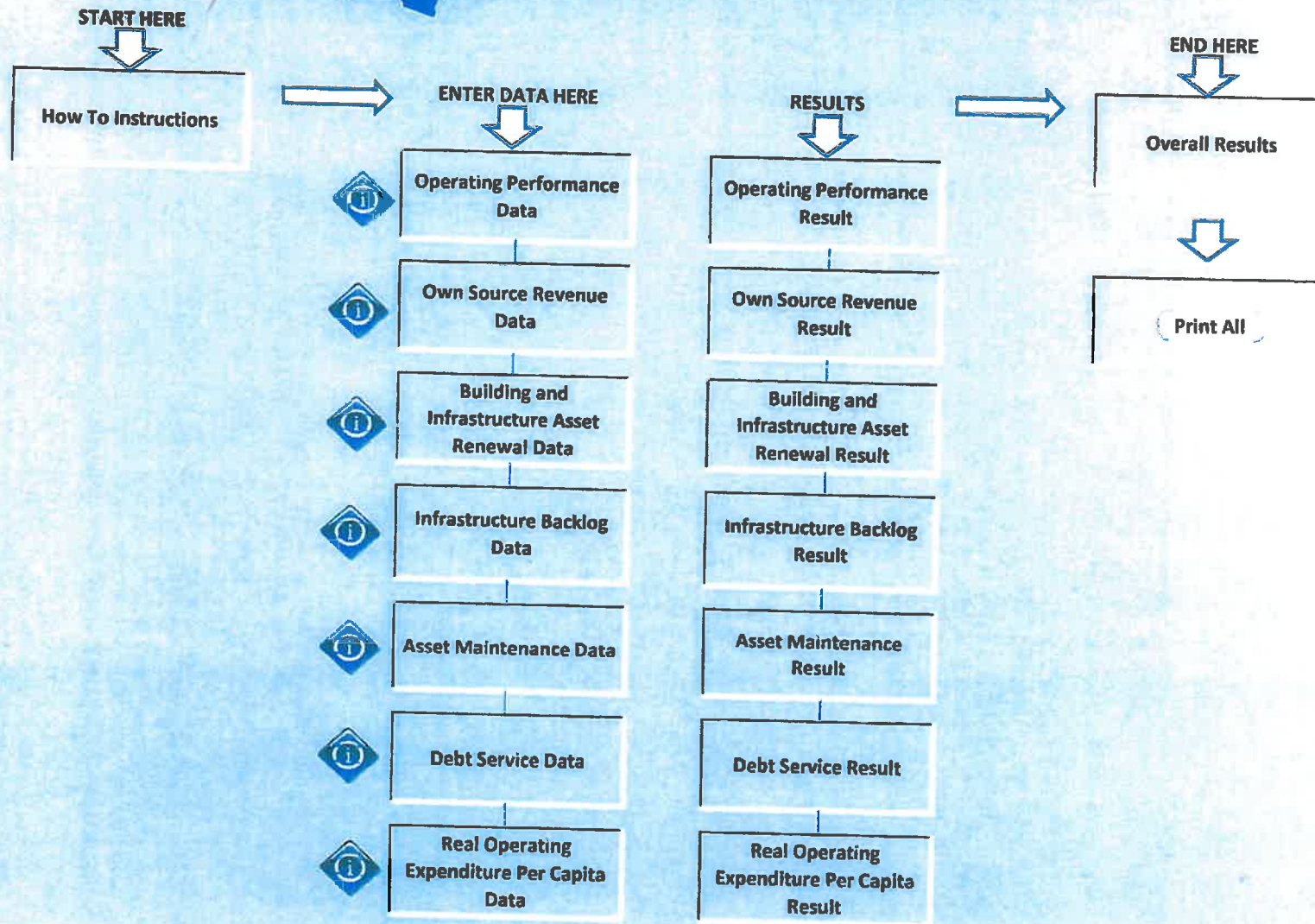
**Debt Service Ratio** Indicates whether Council is using debt wisely to share the life-long cost of assets and avoid excessive rate increases.

**Benchmark:** It is appropriate that Council's should carry some level of debt to ensure inter-generational equity in funding major infrastructure.

## Efficiency

**Real Operating Expenditure per capita** Indicates how well Councils are utilising economies of scale and managing service levels to achieve efficiencies.

**Benchmark:** Focuses on each Council's individual performance over time, rather than comparing with others. Decline in real expenditure per capita indicates improved efficiency (all things being equal).



# The Fit for the Future toolkit



Template 1

**Self-Assessment Tool**

**Council Merger Proposal**

Template 2

**Council Improvement Proposal**  
(Existing structure)

Template 3

**Rural Council Proposal**  
(to be released following further development)

*Toolkit available at: [www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au)*

## Rural Council Characteristics

High operating costs associated with a dispersed population and limited opportunities for return on investment

Local economies that are based on agricultural/resource industries

Low-rate base and high grant reliance

Long distance to a major (or sub) regional centre

Limited options for mergers

Difficulty in attracting and retaining skilled and experienced staff

Challenges in financial sustainability and provision of adequate services and infrastructure

High importance of retaining local identity, social capital, and capacity for service delivery

Small and static or declining population spread over a large area



# The Rural Council Options

These options were developed through the workshop process. Your Council may develop proposals for any or all, of the options:

1. Resource sharing
2. Shared administration
3. Specialty services
4. Streamlined governance
5. Streamlined planning, reporting and regulation
6. Service review

Proposals do not need to be limited to these options



OBERON COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT OBERON COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2015

Oberon Council is holding a series of community meetings to present the Draft Oberon Community Strategic Plan 2015. The Draft Oberon Community Strategic Plan 2015 and associated documents will be on public exhibition from 25 May until 22 June 2015.

Community Meetings will be held at the following locations and dates:

Tue 26 May	6.00pm	Robert Hooper Community Centre, Fleming Street, Oberon
Wed 3 June	2.00pm	Robert Hooper Community Centre, Fleming Street, Oberon
Thur 4 June	6.00pm	O'Connell Public School Hall, Black Mills Lane, O'Connell
Mon 8 June	6.00pm	Black Springs Community Hall, Dog Rocks Road, Black Springs
Thur 11 June	7.00pm	Burruga Sport and Recreation Club, Lloyd Street, Burruga

Council representatives will be happy to address Community Groups and Organisations in relation to the Plan and interested groups should contact Council's Executive Coordinator, Sharon Swannell on 6329 8151.

The Draft Oberon Community Strategic Plan 2015 and associated documents will be available for viewing at the following locations:

**Council's Administration Centre**  
137-139 Oberon Street, Oberon or phone 6329 8100 for further information

**Oberon Library**  
Cnr Dart & Fleming Streets, Oberon

**Oberon Visitor Information Centre**  
48 Ross Street, Oberon

**Council's Website**  
[oberon.nsw.gov.au](http://oberon.nsw.gov.au) or QR Code



Written submissions are invited in relation to the Draft Oberon Community Strategic Plan 2015 up until 4.30pm on Monday 22 June 2015. These should be addressed to the General Manager, Oberon Council, PO Box 84, Oberon NSW 2787.

# OBERON



## Community Presentation - Fit For the Future Thursday 23 April 2015, Commencing at 5.38pm

**Councillors:** Deputy Mayor Kerry Gibbons (chair); Cllr John Morgan, Cllr Jill Evans, Cllr Ian Doney, Cllr Kathy Sajowitz and Cllr Sam Lord

**Staff:** General Manager Alan Cairney, Planning and Development Director Gary Wallace, Works and Engineering Director Chris Schumacher, Community Services Coordinator Kathy Beesley, Management Accountant Tim Booth and Executive Coordinator Sharon Swannell

**Apologies:** Mayor John McMahon

**Community Members:** Brenda Lyon, Don Capel, Julian Sortland, Veronika Cvitanovic

Alan Cairney welcomed community members and introduced Councillors and Staff.

A presentation was provided by Councillors and Management Staff.

Questions:

asked do the State Government still cap rates?

Alan Cairney replied yes. We have just gone through the process of applying for a special rate variation.

asked in relation to boundary changes do the community in those areas have any say in what Council area they are in or is it just a Council negotiation?

General Manager Alan Cairney replied the Boundaries Commission used to be more active, a petition of more than 95 signatures would be required. That has not come about and we have not initiated those discussions as Bathurst and Lithgow have not shown any interest in this process.

asked a question in relation to debt ratio, what is the percentage based on?

Alan Cairney replied, 5% of revenue. It is based on Council's ability to repay any debt.

commented that the Rural Council 6 options should be applied no matter which model you go for.

asked a question about resource sharing, does that relate to things such as regional library?

Alan Cairney stated Council had previously had a bad experience under a shared arrangement with Lithgow Library but we do collaborate quite well with Bathurst and other areas.

asked has Council looked at the Hunter Region Council's as a model? Things such as centralised Records Management etc.

Alan Cairney replied yes we have visited and reviewed their benchmark. They are a much bigger population base; we have a much larger geographical area with a lower population base.



asked did Council ever release the results of the survey that was undertaken late last year?

Alan Cairney replied that there were 309 submissions, 201 voted for 10% increase, 88 voted for a 5% and 20 commented they wanted no increase at all.

commented there is strong community support for maintaining the Council. I think the message to get across is if we want to maintain the Council we have to be prepared to pay for it.

Councillor Kerry Gibbons commented that our Council get issues resolved quickly, this would not happen if we were part of a larger Council. He also commented that the attendance is disappointing, it is difficult to get people to attend meetings such as this. The Oberon community always amazes me; we have fantastic facilities, great services, fantastic volunteer base, new blocks of land opening up on both sides of town.

commented that the Government is always talking about cutting red tape and now they are creating more.

Alan Cairney replied that the cost has been very high to go through this process. The big wins for the State are in the Metropolitan areas.

Councillor Ian Doney replied Local Government has the opportunity to be one of the least bureaucratic organisations.

added it is a costly exercise to provide the information to the State to meet the constant expectations.

Councillor Ian Doney replied that he believes the community want good mature leadership, practical and efficiently delivered. People want to be able to talk to somebody and get something fixed. I believe the community continue to trust us. We have to jump through these hoops, but think we have a huge amount of community support.

asked if Council submits its Fit for the Future proposal who then determines if Oberon is Fit for the Future.

Alan Cairney explained that the plan needs to show how you will become more sustainable into the future, deterioration is reversing. Some Councils will take longer to become sustainable into the future. The story about how sustainable you are going to be and how you engage with the community about the problems you have and how you are going to overcome those problems are what is important. An expert panel will be appointed to go through every Council's Fit for the Future submission. Most Councils will hear back by October.

commented it does no harm for organisations to have a serious look at themselves periodically.

Councillor John Morgan stated that the amount of planning, documentation and forward thinking is very impressive. I believe we are in good stead.

Councillor Kerry Gibbons thanked all of the attendees and closed the meeting at 6.54pm.



# Review Weather Watch

## Oberon Central Tablelands Local weather

For the week ending March 24, 2015. The figures for Oberon are from the official Bureau of Meteorology source. Those from outlying areas are from Oberon Review's unofficial weather watch.

Day	Min	Max	Wind	Cloud	Humidity	UV	Notes
MONDAY	11A	27	0	0	0	0	Blue Sky
TUESDAY	12	23	0	0	0	0	Windy
WEDNESDAY	12	23	0	0	0	0	Id
THURSDAY	12	23	0	0	0	0	Id
FRIDAY	12	23	0	0	0	0	Id
SATURDAY	12	23	0	0	0	0	Id
SUNDAY	12	23	0	0	0	0	Id

**DAM LEVEL**  
**58.52%**  
FALLING

**Weekly & Daily water consumption for the past 7 days**  
**1.99ML DAILY**  
**13.94ML WEEKLY**

### Forecast

**Thursday 26 March**  
Partly fog in the early morning. Strong dry West. wind to easterly. Only 20 to 30 inch. D. bright temperatures falling to between 8 and 12 in day. 2-3 am temperature - falling between 18 and 22.

**Friday 27 March**  
Bumpy. Windy. Clouds - only 15 to 25 inch. D. bright temperatures falling to between 2 and 8 in day. 2-3 am temperature - falling between 17 and 22.

**Saturday 28 March**  
Bumpy. Light rain. D. bright temperatures falling to between 2 and 7 with daytime temperatures reaching 20 to 25.

For extended weather forecast go to [www.oberonreview.com.au](http://www.oberonreview.com.au)

### Jenolan Caves Weather

Date	Min	Max	Rain	Comments
18/3	8.8	22.6	0	
19/3	11.1	28.4	0	
20/3	10.7	28.7	0	
21/3	12	32	4mm	
22/3	-	-	-	
23/3	13	19	2.6mm	
24/3	-	-	-	

**Local Council continues to promote the following water saving tips to its water supply customers and the public:**

- Residential Council considers and encourages water saving tips: 10mm and 4mm only.
- Hand held hose - not a biggie but is.
- Hard hat use - no holding of hand sprays such as paint and disinfectant.
- 30 sec - washing - shut off water if possible.
- Five focus - Five focus, not a biggie but is a biggie for the future.
- New focus - not a biggie but is a biggie for the future.

Check out the Oberon Review facebook page

## Letters to the editor

Editor,  
Smaller NSW towns like Oberon could suffer a loss of identity if they are merged with another council as a result of government amalgamation plans to be introduced if the state government is re-elected at Saturday's elections.

But beyond pure identity issues, many other serious ramifications of the amalgamation plans are also a worrying issue for NSW local communities.

The more financially secure centres will be in focus if the state government is re-elected and it is decided what regional community is merged with another, sometimes with a less financially secure neighbouring council.

Plans for instance to merge Oberon with Bathurst have been highlighted in the media by Professor Brian Doherty of the University of New England's Centre for Local Government. Oberon, they state, will inherit Bathurst's \$22 million in outstanding loans and another \$72 million to bring Bathurst's assets up to standard.

I am a journalist who reported for Central West and other NSW regional media in the 1960s and I am shocked by the extent of this debt and I fear for the future of councils, like Oberon, that may be affected in this way by council amalgamation policy.

I formed a great affinity with the Central West during that period and seeing what the

government plans for such towns as Oberon was a shock.

This is not a political issue because it goes beyond politics, but it is about the future of local government.

Oberon and other financially secure towns should not be subject to such bad policy.

Presently I am a spokesperson for the apolitical Hands off Mosman Coalition, fighting the same council amalgamation battle in metropolitan Sydney.

I fear for those financially secure smaller towns like Oberon if the State Government's amalgamation plans are introduced.

Apart from the financial considerations of a merger with Bathurst, the wider amalgamation plans hold serious ramifications for all NSW Councils.

All over the country from Tasmania to West Australia, Queensland and Victoria, forced amalgamations of councils are an issue.

In those states forced amalgamations have either been abandoned or councils that have been merged before are now being de-amalgamated.

The question is why when such action elsewhere is proving this policy has failed is the state government of NSW ploughing ahead with it.

These facts are being described as scare tactics but the truth is certainly scary.

The Victorian experience is informative.

In Victoria as soon as a council was subject to a merger, the council representatives were removed and administrators appointed.

This not only removed local knowledge and affinity with residents, but puts development and other plans in the hands of those who are unelected to make decisions for local residents.

Even more worrying is the lifting of Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) which dictate the height, location and environmental impact of developments.

As soon as a merger plan is put in place and administrators appointed the local LEPs no longer apply.

There are many more such problems involved with amalgamations and it is up to local politicians to oppose it to ensure that reasonable council improvement plans are put in place.

Local politicians should state before Saturday if they support council amalgamations on record, yes or no.

Oberon, I'm sure, has its own community's interests at heart and it has a talented team to counter council amalgamations policy.

But issues such as this present great challenges.

WILL TUCK

### Hands off Mosman Coalition

amalgamations with support from the state governments to work through that process."

This statement was made almost a year ago, but it is the one on the NSW Liberals website, and therefore the one the government is taking into Saturday's election.

It is therefore the commitment they be held to account on, and which they will change at their peril.

Bob Wilson

Editor,  
Forced amalgamations are always hanging over the heads of local councils, whatever the colour of the state government.

Minister for Local Government Paul Toole told the Western Advocate on April 23, 2014: "The government has stated there will be no forced amalgamations and I aim to honour that, but there are also some councils who have already indicated they want to take up voluntary

## Community diary

■ Oberon Meats on Wheels roster  
Thursday, March 26  
Car 1 P Williams  
Car 2 L Kurtz

Friday, March 27  
Car 1 J Clayton  
Car 2 A Kirby and H Risset

Saturday, March 28  
Car 1 P McIntosh and I Braun  
Car 2 N and M Fitzpatrick

Sunday, March 29  
Car 1 N and M Fitzpatrick  
Car 2 D and K McFurray

Monday, March 30  
Car 1 K and B Harvey  
Car 2 M and B O'Brien

Tuesday, March 31  
Car 1 R Brown  
Car 2 A Evans

Wednesday, April 1  
Car 1 R Toedter  
Car 2 E Brothie and E Croc.

Could volunteers let Marie know how many times a month and what days they can help as two cars are required every day.

■ Come to the Robey Centre at Oberon Multipurpose Service in North Street on Mondays and Thursdays from 11am to 2pm.

Meet new people, enjoy light exercises, craft, quizzes and bingo with lots of laughs.

We can pick you up and take you home.

Cost is \$2 and \$5 for lunch, tea and coffee as well as morning tea.

Please contact Annette Roels on 6336 7200 for more information.

■ Oberon and District Museum, entry via Scotia Avenue, is open every Saturday and Sunday 10.30am to 5pm, or by appointment. Enquiries 6336 1016.

■ Centrelink/Medicare agency is located at the Neighbourhood Centre at 12 Ross Street and is available for all Centrelink, Medicare or any Department of Human Services' needs. Call in Wednesday to Friday 9am-1pm and we can assist you in your enquiries. There is a self-service terminal for you to lodge or enquire on benefits payable and a scanner, fax for documents which need to be sent. Please make use of this free service and save a trip to Bathurst. Please contact Sue Fisher-Smith on 6336 0909.

■ Oberon Roller Derby (ORD) training is now on Monday night's from 6pm to 9pm at the Oberon High School.

■ The Oberon Uniting Church would like to invite any members of the community to an informal get-together for morning tea at 10.30am, activities followed by lunch at the Uniting Church Hall on the fourth Monday of each month. Cost is \$10 which covers morning tea, activities and lunch.

■ Knit With Love will be held on first Friday of every month from 10am-12.30pm in the Community Centre. All welcome.



**TOURIST HOTEL**

**UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT**

**SADIES RESTAURANT**

**OPEN - GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER SATURDAY**

**EASTER SEAFOOD NIGHT**

- BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL \$35 PER PERSON ½ DEPOSIT AT TIME OF BOOKING.
- EACH DINNER WILL ENJOY - OYSTERS NATURAL, PRAWN COCKTAIL, SALT + PEPPER CALAMARI, SALMON, BAG BAKED FISH, FRESH PRAWNS, SCALLOPS

**OPEN 7 DAY'S A WEEK**

- A-LA CARTE AND GOOD HOME COOKING
- TAKE AWAYS AVAILABLE
- PRIVATE FUNCTIONS

**ENQUIRIES**  
**PHONE 6336 1378**  
**OR**  
**0437 382 232**

**140 OBERON ST, OBERON • PH: 6336 1378**



## Media Release

**Bathurst Regional Council; Blayney Shire Council; Lithgow City Council and Oberon Council discuss the Fit for the Future Local Government Reform Proposals**

**For Immediate Release – Friday 20 February 2015**

Representatives of the Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow and Oberon Council's met on Wednesday 18 February to discuss the Fit for the Future Local Government Reform Proposal's.

The meeting was held in the Oberon Council Chambers where Oberon Mayor John McMahon welcomed Mayor's, Deputy Mayors and General Managers from the Councils present.

The reform program is the State Government's response to the final reports from the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the Local Government Acts Taskforce announced in September last year.

One of the recommendations was for a potential merger of Bathurst Regional Council with Oberon Council. Bathurst Mayor Gary Rush said at this time Bathurst Council has not made a decision about this proposal, however would only consider a merger if there was a neighbouring Council interested in entering into discussions.

Mayor of Blayney, Scott Ferguson said that Blayney Council has been approached by Orange Council about developing a Merger Business Case Proposal involving Cabonne and Blayney Shire Council's. Blayney Council has not reached a decision about this proposal, however all options will need to be considered for the best possible outcome for the Blayney Region.

Lithgow City Council Mayor, Maree Statham advised that the Lithgow City Council are opposed to forced amalgamations and are not in favour of any boundary adjustments. Lithgow Council aim to increase its population to 25,000 residents in order to attract new business and provide an economic stimulus for the Lithgow area.

Oberon Mayor, John McMahon reaffirmed Oberon Council's position that they are opposed to forced amalgamations but would have liked to consider boundary adjustments with the two neighbouring Councils in order to deliver more effective services to adjacent rural communities. Mayor Maree Statham has rejected the request by Oberon Council for boundary changes.

Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow and Oberon are all members of the current Central West Regional Organisation of Councils (Centroc) and have confirmed their participation in the Central West Joint Organisation Pilot. This regional collaboration has for many years delivered cost savings and regional initiatives which member Councils have benefited from. The group are looking forward to increased opportunities available through the Pilot Joint Organisation Program.

In a discussion led by Bathurst Regional Council it was agreed to make approaches to the Upper Macquarie County Council about the lack of response to a previous request for an effective Strategic Plan to address weed control in the four Local Government Areas. The Upper Macquarie County Council is the statutory weeds authority for the four member Councils. With increased subdivision of rural land across the region the proliferation of weeds has become a huge problem. It is felt that a more robust plan is needed to address this problem.

ENDS



## MEDIA RELEASE

The NSW State Government has responded to the final reports by the Independent Local Government Review Panel and the Local Government Acts Taskforce.

NSW Premier Mike Baird and Local Government Minister Paul Toole have recently announced a "Fit for the Future" reform package which includes funding of up to \$1billion "to help strengthen communities and ensure councils as Fit for the Future". This is the NSW Governments response to the final reports.

Details about the Fit for the Future reform program is available on this website [www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au)

Every Council in NSW is being asked to look at their current situation and to consider the future needs of their communities.

Council's are encouraged to discuss ideas and options with their community and neighbouring local government areas.

For almost two years the Mayors and General Managers from Bathurst, Blayney, Lithgow and Oberon, have been meeting to consider the progress reports and the final reports of the Review Panel and the LG Acts Taskforce. The Review Panel's final report suggested a potential merger of Oberon and Bathurst.

Oberon Mayor, John McMahon said "these meetings have been very productive and there has been genuine spirit of cooperation. We have also talked about weed control with all four Council's being members of the Upper Macquarie County Council, which is the authority responsible for weed management. We will carefully consider the details of the reform package and will continue talking with our neighbouring Councils and also our community."

Oberon General Manager, Alan Cairney notes that "the NSW Government is asking all Councils to submit a proposal by 30 June 2015 on how they intend to become Fit for the Future. This means that each Council needs to address the question of financial sustainability and their capacity to continue providing services. This includes how our finances are managed and how well we can maintain community assets such as our roads, swimming pool, our library and our buildings. We will need to demonstrate how we can best provide value for money for our current and future ratepayers."

The Fit for the Future reform package will provide incentives for Councils to merge or amalgamate however significant potential savings are available through cheaper finance arrangements for Councils to invest in local infrastructure. For Oberon Council this could lead to better roads and improved community services.

Clr John McMahon  
Mayor  
ENDS

Alan Cairney  
General Manager

Release Date: 12 September 2014

**To book this space for your business contact Cheryl on 6336 1340**

# oberon Review

Published every Thursday - \$1.60 (incl GST) Thursday, June 13, 2013 Issue No. Phone: (02) 6336 1340 Fax: (02) 6336 6111 email: mail@oberonreview.com.au website: oberonreview.com.au onyourside.com.au



## Show of strength on amalgamation

OBERON residents were out in force last Wednesday at the Independent Local Government Review Panel community meeting to make it clear they are opposed to any proposed council amalgamation.

Attendance at the meeting, held at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre, was dominated by more than 50 concerned Oberon residents.

The meeting was part of the review panel's consultation process before it makes final recommendations to the NSW Government about the state's councils.

The panel, in a consultation paper released earlier this year, recommended that the number of councils in the state be reduced from 223 to 97.

Specifically, it recommended Bathurst and Oberon councils merge.

Oberon mayor John McMahon is adamant his council will do anything to avoid such a merger.

Barry Lang, a member of the newly formed community committee opposing amalgamation, said Oberon cannot afford to be absorbed into a larger council.

"What's happened over the years in Oberon is that we have lost the intellectual capital," he said. "At one stage you had bank managers and forestry officers who were involved in the community, helping different committees."

"We also had industry managers and when CSR were here they were very community minded."



**HANDS OFF:** Barry Lang, a member of the community committee opposing amalgamation, was vocal at the community meeting last Wednesday evening. Photo: CHRIS SEAROOK

"If Oberon is to be tacked onto another council, I am very concerned that we would lose more management and there would be no incentive for people to live here."

"You need a good cross-section of people for a community to function properly and if we merge with another council we could lose that."

Cr McMahon is adamant Oberon Council will do any-

thing to avoid such a merger.

As well as the public meeting, a meeting was held between the councils and review panel member Glenn Inglis behind closed doors.

More specific details of the draft were discussed and Cr McMahon said he left the meeting feeling much better, knowing that other councils respected Oberon's position.

"The recognition is that

there is no benefit in amalgamation for Oberon with Bathurst, Lithgow or any other council," he said.

"There was an acknowledgement from all councils that we are geographically different or can stand alone financially."

Cr McMahon said Oberon's financial position was strong and would "only get better over the next five years".

**WINTER WARMERS 25% OFF**

Hot Water Bottles ..... \$6.49

Hot Water Bottle - Knitted cover ..... \$5.99

Woolly Fleece Shirts ..... \$7.49

Woolly Fleece Throw - Plain ..... \$8.49

Specials end 30/6/13

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Flooring by Brights

61 George St, Bathurst.  
Next to Don Murphy's

6331 4866

### ATTENTION TO BUYERS



This large home will surprise those looking for additional room. Located in an appealing community only 15 minutes from the township of Oberon it is close to the school, general store, tennis courts, and recreation oval.

- Brick veneer home, four bedrooms, main with en-suite
- Family / dining area with slow combustion wood heating
- Lounge room and rumpus/study
- Three way bathroom



- Timber kitchen
- Double garage
- Large block with established gardens

What an excellent time to invest in this property and enjoy the community life style of this village.

**PRICE: \$298,000**

Mary David  
Glenn Newstead  
Kurt Booth

0439 380 222  
0437 600 365  
0488 675 048

### PRIME POSITION



The whole family will be right at home in this four bedroom brick veneer home. If plenty of room is what you're after then this is the perfect home for you.

- The spacious design incorporates four large bedrooms
- Lounge room, eat-in kitchen, bathroom, laundry
- Massive double garage underneath the home with extra toilet
- Separate double garage in the back corner of the yard



- All this on a good size block of 1,039 square metres
- And its just a few minutes to the shops and schools

**PRICE: \$298,995**

Mary David  
Glenn Newstead  
Kurt Booth

0439 380 222  
0437 600 365  
0488 675 048

**Rearbails**  
4 bedrooms, renovated, double carpet, 2 living areas, gas/electric heating, double garage plus double carport, 3 bedrooms, main with built-in, gas heating, freshly painted throughout, new carpet, new oven & dishwasher, single garage. Call Sharyn or Jess 6336 1108

\$950pw

\$270pw

**OPEN FOR INSPECTIONS Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June**

15.3 Butterfield Lane 11.00 - 11.30am	34 Thorne Road 1.00 - 1.45pm
2 Mutton Falls Road 12.15 - 12.30pm	18 Brennan Crescent 1.50 - 2.00pm
13 Brennan Crescent 1.00 - 1.30pm	1694 Abacomb Road 2.00 - 3.00pm

**Ray White Rural**

Emma Mooney

To book this space for your business contact Cheryl on 6336 1340

# oberon Review

Thursday, June 6, 2013

Published every Thursday - \$1.60 (includes GST)

Phone: (02) 6336 1340 :: Fax (02) 6336 1811 :: email: mail.oberonreview@ruralpress.com :: website: oberon.yourguide.com.au

Issue No.



**WINTER WONDERS**

Cup A Soup 2 Serve ..... **\$1.39** Save 75¢

B/Gold Fire Lighters 24 Cubes ..... **\$2.49** Save 47¢

Kellogg's Special K 535g ..... **\$5.99** Save \$1.27

Kellogg's Sultan's Bran 730g ..... **\$5.99** Save \$1.58

Cadbury's Choc Blocks 180x200g ..... **3 for \$10** Save \$3.77

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**Choices**  
Flooring by Bright  
61 George St, Bathurst  
6331 4866 Next to Don Murphys

## Council call to arms Residents rally to fight amalgamation

THE people of Oberon have spoken – they want their council left alone.

More than 40 people attended a meeting on Monday to form a community committee to help in Oberon's fight against any amalgamation with Bathurst.

The amalgamation was recommended in a paper released earlier this year by the Independent Local Government Review Panel.

Oberon Council has moved a formal council motion stating it does not agree with any amalgamation.

Mayor John McMahon chaired the meeting on Monday, telling residents that now is the time to act before it's too late.

Committee members are Brian Dellow, Bob Bearup, Barry Lang, Ray Ross, Bruce Armstrong and Ian Gordon.

The committee, along with other concerned residents, attended the review panel's community hearing into council amalgamations held at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre last night.

Cr McMahon and general manager Alan Cairney also attended a review panel workshop earlier in the day.

The review panel – which recommended earlier this year that the number of councils in NSW be reduced from 223 to just 97 – will conduct community consultation before it reports again to the NSW Government.

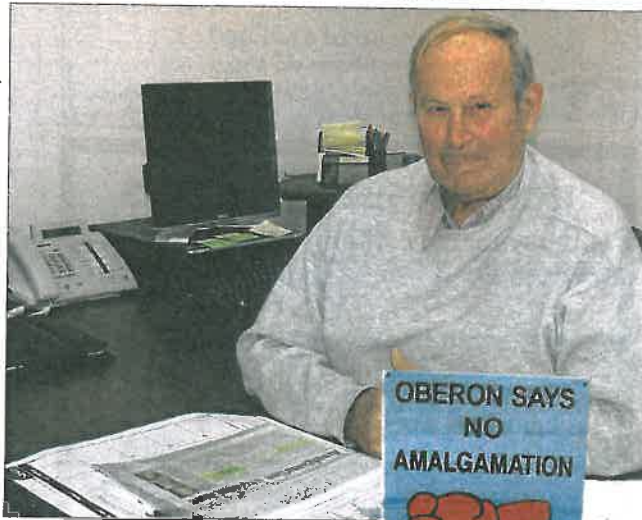
It will put forward a number of options in September for further consultation.

Cr McMahon told the *Western Advocate* that council wouldn't be keen to have anything to do with joining forces with Bathurst.

He also shunned any suggestion that Blayney, Bathurst and Oberon would also be a suitable local amalgamation model.

"We are in a much sounder financial position than they (Bathurst) are. A recent Treasury report into local government indicated only three per cent of councils are in a very sound financial position," Cr McMahon said.

"Oberon is in the next bracket of about 22 per cent of councils being in a sound financial position, while Bathurst comes in as being in the bottom 75 per cent below us."



**NO THANKS:** Oberon mayor John McMahon.

Cr McMahon said there is a consensus in the district that if Oberon were to be amalgamated with Bathurst it would become a backwater to the larger regional centre.

"We have concerns our services may be downgraded to keep Bathurst in the black and that Oberon would be sacrificed to improve their financial position," he said.

"Any council's viability should be based on a council's ability to be sustainable and deliver services, and we certainly meet this criteria. It would be a travesty of justice if we were to be amalgamated."

Bathurst mayor Monica Morse said many smaller councils were concerned they would lose their identity if they amalgamated.

"I can understand where Cr McMahon is coming from," she said. "But I am not sure if they will have much to say about it [amalgamation]. Why would there be all

**REJECTED:** Oberon's message is clear.

these reports and recommendations be taking place if nothing is going to happen?

"Personally, I would like to see the boundaries worked out before deciding the centres to be amalgamated."

"People didn't like the fact Evans was told to amalgamate with Bathurst, but it worked out well in the end."

"The villages gained enormously out of that initiative, but it was made easier because the Evans Shire headquarters was here."

### MAGICAL VIEWS



Seeing is believing... this home has the lot. Located minutes from town this spacious and beautifully decorated home has it all. Embracing a wonderful sense of peace and privacy this property will impress both inside and out.

- Three good size bedrooms main with en-suite and spa
- Fourth bedroom or study with internal access from garage
- Modern kitchen with large pantry
- Slow combustion wood heating and central heating
- Outdoor entertainment deck
- Large modern bathroom with in floor electric heating
- Formal lounge room, family room, dining room all a generous size
- Double garage with internal access

#### Rentals

3 bedroom home, main with built ins, gas heating, new carpet, new dishwasher, new oven, \$270pw  
3 bedroom home, 35 mins from Oberon, ensuite, double garage, wood & gas heating, tank & bore water, \$280pw  
Call Sharyn or Jess 6336 1100



This is not to be missed, sit and enjoy the views; whatever you want in a home this one will deliver. What a great opportunity to secure this well presented property.

**PRICE: \$525,000**

Mary David 0429 360 222  
Glenys Newstead 0437 600 365  
Kurt Booth 0499 975 049

### PERFECT LOCATION



Be quick, this will not last long. Situated in a good location this property needs to be seen. Short walk to sporting oval and day care centre.

- Three bedrooms, two with built-ins
- Lounge room with gas & electric heating
- Sunroom at front of house
- Neat kitchen/gas cooking
- Separate dining area
- Single lock-up garage/carport
- Good fenced yard/small garden shed

**PRICE: \$175,000**

Mary David 0429 360 222  
Glenys Newstead 0437 600 365  
Kurt Booth 0499 975 049

**OPEN FOR INSPECTIONS Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June**

121 Curtis Street, Oberon  
109 North Street

12.30 - 1.00pm  
1.15 - 1.45pm

**Ray White Rural**

## Oberon Health Council

### Moving into aged care info session

THE Oberon Health Council in conjunction with The Aged Care Rights Service Inc. (TARS) will be holding an information session entitled "Moving into Aged Care" for interested members of the community.

The session will be held on June 4 from 1-2pm in the Robert Hooper Community Centre.

The session will be conducted by Jillian McDonnell from TARS.

Anyone interested in this session is invited to attend and RSVP is not required.

In addition, there are flyers advertising this event on notice boards and in shops around town.

This session will be followed by another on June 18 in the same venue presented by Centrelink, entitled "Fees and Charges in Aged Care".

Advertising of this session will occur following the first one on June 4.

# Forum a great chance to see technology solutions

LOCAL construction businesses and farmers in the Greater Blue Mountains area will have the chance to see the latest cutting-edge construction technology up close at the first ever Central West Technology Forum.

Around \$3 million worth of industry-leading construction machinery, equipment and technology will be on show on over 20 acres of space at the Albion Street Industrial Subdivision, Maher Drive, Oberon, on May 30 and 31.

The forum will include demonstrations of innovative CAT machines, and provide visitors with access to cutting-edge technology solutions, and advice from experienced technical experts.

The Central West Technology Forum is the first of its kind in the district.

The forum is being hosted by WesTrac, in partnership with Caterpillar and Oberon Council.

This forum is a significant event for

local business, industry and the community at large.

Fred Haynes, executive manager of sales and support for WesTrac NSW/ACT, said that the forum was a great chance for local business and industry to witness first-hand how Caterpillar's technology solutions could help improve their business.

"With a great deal of development happening in the Greater Blue Mountains region, many local businesses are seeking ways in which they can be more effective, efficient and ultimately deliver a better finished product," Mr Haynes said.

Oberon Council's director of engineering, Aruna Wickramasinghe said that the council was delighted to hold this event in Oberon in partnership with WesTrac and Caterpillar.

"This forum will give neighbouring councils and all potential customers a fantastic opportunity to see first-hand

the latest innovations and products available in the market," Mr Wickramasinghe said.

Jeff Fitch, Caterpillar's technology and solutions Asia-Pacific marketing manager, said that Caterpillar is delighted to support WesTrac at the forum, and build upon its long-term partnership of working together to meet customer needs.

Over the two days of the forum, machine demonstrations will feature the Cat M Series motor grader, the first motor grader to offer a joystick control, the D6K track-type tractor and the 324D L hydraulic excavator.

Councillor John McMahon, mayor of Oberon Council, will officially launch the forum at 8:30am on Thursday, May 30 at the Oberon RSL, located on the corner of Oberon and Dudley roads, Oberon, NSW.

## TONALLI



Architect designed country homestead on 25 acres.

- Architect designed four bedroom stone and western red cedar homestead
- Raised ceilings and exposed trusses a feature
- Two large separate living areas
- Modern kitchen with plenty of cupboard space
- Edna Walling inspired garden watered by computerised underground watering system
- Water a feature including 15,000 gallon rain water tank drinking quality bore rated at 750 gallons per hour with back up well
- Two car garage/workshop with north facing artist or craft studio
- Well improved 25 acres with good pastures and one large dam
- Woodshed with attached machinery storage
- Large set of steel & timber sheep and cattle yards

Price: \$680,000

Contact: Patrick Bird 0438 331 1100  
Mary David 0438 330 222  
Kurt Booth 0438 975 046

Ray White Rural

raywhite.com.au

## Review Weather Watch

### Oberon Central Tablelands Local weather

For the week ending May 26, 2013. The figures for Oberon are from the official Bureau of Meteorology sources. These from outlying areas are from Oberon Review's unofficial weather watches.

Oberon "Springbank" - 1100 metres

Day	Min	Max	Rain	Comment
22/5	-0.7	8.2	0.2	frost/rain
23/5	2.8	8.6	14.4	much needed rain
24/5	4.9	11.1	0.8	drizzle
25/5	0.8	13.1	0.5	frost
26/5	-3.1	14.7	0.2	huge frost
27/5	-0.8	12.9	0.4	free/cloud developing
28/5	4.2	13.7	trace	fog and cloudy

Jenolan Caves - 730 metres

Day	Min	Max	Rain	Comment
22/5	1	14	1	High scattered cloud
23/5	1	10	19.8	foggy
24/5	6	11	8.3	rainy
25/5	0	12	0.5	clear
26/5	0	12	0.5	clear
27/5	1	19	0.6	clear
28/5	2	12	0.5	still and cloudy

• Buckleholme Gorge - no spring and irrigation systems before 1600 and after 4pm only.

- Hand held hose - must have a trigger nozzle.
- Hand Sprayer - no loading of herbicides, such as paraquat and glyphosate.
- Watering - watering vehicles on roads is prohibited.
- Fire Hoses - fire hoses may be used for fire fighting purposes only.
- Fire Lanes - new lanes may be watered at any time of the day, for the first 14 days after they are installed.

DAM LEVEL  
84.23%  
FALLING

Weekly & Daily water consumption for the past 7 days

1.69ML  
DAILY  
11.85ML  
WEEKLY

Forecast

Thursday 30 May  
Cloudy, isolated showers in north from the early morning. Light while becoming more in afternoon. 15-20°C. Light in the evening. Overcast temps falling to between 4-10 with drizzle from morning between 14-21.

Friday 31 May  
Partly cloudy. Rainy day in north early in the morning. Rainy with drizzle and evening. Windy with drizzle. 15-20°C. Overcast light during afternoon then becoming in 15-20°C with evening drizzle. Drizzle falling to between 5-10 with drizzle from morning between 14-21.

Saturday 1 June  
Cloudy, mainly rain. Windy with drizzle. 15-20°C. Overcast with rain falling to between 7-12 with drizzle from morning between 14-21.

For extended weather forecast go to [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

### ■ Oberon Meets on Wheels roster:

Thursday, May 30

Car 1 and Car 2 Oberon Council

Friday May 31

Car 1 help required

Car 2 I and D Davis

Saturday June 1 and Sunday June 2

Cars 1 and 2 Catholic Church

Monday June 3

Car 1 S Jackson and T Harvey

Car 2 Tara Red Cross

Tuesday June 4

Car 1 R Brown

Car 2 B Dale

Wednesday June 5

Car 1 P Dwyer and L Robinson

Car 2 Oberon First National

Wednesday June 6

Car 1 G Hanrahan and F Ryan

Car 2 P Williams

Could all paperwork for volunteers plus registration, Insurance and licence papers be handed in as soon as possible. Could volunteers let Marie know how many times a month and what days they can help, as two cars are required every day.

■ Oberon Neighbourhood Centre (ONC) is open on

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,

10am to 2pm. ONC is located in

the Robert Hooper Community

Centre in Fleming Street. Phone

6336 0909.

■ Oberon Farmers' Market

stallholders are reminded that if

they want to mention anything

new or special on their stalls at

the next market on Saturday

week, call Bob Wilson on 6335

8447 by this Sunday evening.

Photos welcome.

■ The Burrage District and

Community Association (BDCA)

are holding a dance/concert at

the Burrage Hall on Saturday

June 1 at 7pm. The dance is to

raise funds for Jason South who

lost everything in an overnight

fire which destroyed his house

and all his possessions. Jason

is lucky to escape.

■ Meeting to form a

council amalgamation, Monday,

June 3 at 7pm at Oberon RSL

Club. All interested persons are

urged to attend.

■ Oberon Health Council are

holding an information session

for people wanting to know the

processes involved in moving

into an aged care facility or

retirement village. The session is

on June 4 from 1-2pm at the

Robert Hooper Community

Centre. Guest speaker Jillian

McDonnell from the Aged Care

Rights Service Inc.

■ Oberon Health Council in

conjunction with Ladies Hospital

Auxiliary will be holding a

monster garage sale at the back

of the old Day Care on Saturday

June 8 from 9am until midday.

Items for sale include hospital

beds, chairs, fridges, freezers,

tables, wheelchair walkers,

cupboard doors, drawers,

cupboards, records, plates, cups,

glasses, pie oven, paintings and

heaps more. All money raised

goes towards the hospital

auxiliary funding more up-to-date

equipment for the Health

Service. Parking will be available

off Balfour Street. Enquiries

6336 7200.

■ Next meeting for Oberon

Can Assist is at 6pm, June 13

at RSL club. The financials from

April 11 to May 9 are as follows:

Total Income - \$736.20. Total

Expenditure - \$4,183.70

Number of families helped - 4.

■ Oberon Hospital Auxiliary

will be celebrating the shortest

day of the year with a warm

lunch and a little fun. Come and

join us at noon on Friday, June

21 in the Robert Centre. Cost is

\$8. Please let us know if you

can come by phoning Annelise

Gilbert 6334 5718 or Susan

Lougher 6336 0278.

■ Oberon branch of Can

Assist are holding a Christmas

in July luncheon on July 21 at

noon at the Oberon RSL Club.

Guest speaker will be Narda

Gilmore.

■ Whip with Love knitting

group meets on the first Friday

of the month. The group meet

from 10am until noon in the

Robert Hooper Community

Centre in Fleming Street. It is

open to anyone who would like

to knit a square or two and yarn

is supplied. The contact is Robin

Toedter on 6336 2019.

■ Senior Citizens meet the

second Monday of every month

at the Oberon RSL Club at

1.30pm. New members always

welcome.

■ For bicycle repairs and

maintenance bring your bicycle

to the Oberon Men's Shed on

Tuesdays from 10am for a

quote. We also accept bicycle

donations in any condition. A

small selection of bicycles are

for sale at a reasonable price.

Phone 6336 5331.

## Letters

### Need to act now before it's too late

Editor,  
With the talk of amalgamations being the hot topic at the moment, I have had discussions with the Mayor John McMahon.

Council has now moved a formal motion stating they do not agree with amalgamation involving Oberon Council.

We the residents of Oberon should support our council in its endeavours to provide suitable objections regarding Bathurst wanting to amalgamate Oberon into their fold.

With this in mind, we the res-

idents should form a group and formalise a proper committee to work in conjunction with Oberon Council.

If you are interested in being part of such a committee or even if you just want to support this idea, you are most welcome to come to a meeting on Monday, June 3 commencing at 7pm.

At this meeting a committee should be formed.

This allows for further input into the meeting to be held on June 5 in Bathurst in the BMBC (Bathurst Memorial

Entertainment Centre) from 6pm.

Transport for this meeting in Bathurst can be arranged if you are not able to provide your own.

Contact Oberon Council on 6329 8131 or alternatively contact Marjorie Armstrong on 6336 1760.

Remember, the community has the right to have their say. We need to act now before it is too late.

Marjorie Armstrong.

# Shire sessions aim to discuss plans

OVER the coming weeks Oberon Council will be holding community information sessions to present the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2014 to residents of Oberon and surrounding villages.

All meetings will commence at 5:30pm and will be held at the following locations:

■ Thursday, June 6 2013 at

Black Springs Community Hall  
■ Wednesday, June 12 2013 at  
Burrage Sports and Recreation Club

■ Thursday, June 13 2013 at St  
Thomas Anglican Church Hall in  
O'Connell

■ Wednesday, June 19 2013 at  
the Robert (Bob) Hooper  
Community Centre in Oberon.

The Community Strategic Plan 2013 builds on the first CSP prepared last year. The CSP 2013 includes a revised Delivery Program and Operational Plan which includes details of council's rates and charges for 2013/14 and also new spending such as:

■ A proposed enclosure for the Oberon Swimming Pool

■ Further development of Council's industrial land off Albion Street

■ Employment of a part-time grants officer

■ Additional funds for village improvements

■ Construction of an extension to the O'Connell RFS Shed

■ Purchase of land to develop

a recreation ground at O'Connell.

For further information please visit council's website at [www.oberon.nsw.gov.au](http://www.oberon.nsw.gov.au) or call into the Oberon library, visitor information centre or council's administration centre to view a copy of the documents currently on public exhibition until June 24, 2013.

## Locals urged to join amalgamation fight

THE NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel has released its discussion paper *Future Direction for NSW Local Government: Twenty Essential Steps* and will be in Bathurst next Wednesday, June 5.

The panel have issued an updated consultation schedule and have invited Mayor John McMahon, councillors and the general manager Alan Cairney to attend a three-hour workshop on Wednesday, June 5.

The panel advises that the aim of the workshops is to provide the opportunity to discuss the detailed package of proposals and options included in the future directions of council amalgamation progress report.

The workshop for Oberon includes Bathurst, Lithgow and Mid Western (Mudgee).

Mayor John McMahon has made it clear he strongly opposes any amalgamation. Cr McMahon said Oberon Council has always planned for the future and is financially sustainable.

"If Oberon amalgamated with Bathurst, ratepayers would face substantial rate increases with a reduction in services."

A Community Hearing will be held on the same day from 6pm to 8pm at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre in Bathurst.

The aim of the hearing is to provide an opportunity for local people and organisations to express their views directly to the panel and discuss the various ideas and proposals in the paper.

In the meantime, Marjorie Armstrong is calling on Oberon residents to attend a meeting at the Oberon RSL Club on Monday, June 3 at 7pm in the hope of forming a committee to allow for further input to the panel.

"We are up to stage three of four stages, and we have to act now before it is too late," she said.

## Meet the Governor at dinner

OBERON residents are invited to the Official Sesquicentenary Dinner held at the Oberon RSL Auditorium on Saturday, July 6.

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO, Governor of New South Wales

(pictured), will be the special guest of honour at the official dinner.

Enjoy a three course meal and great entertainment from the Bay Rum Band. Tickets can be purchased for \$50 per person from Oberon Council.

Join us to help celebrate this special milestone in Oberon's history. For further information please contact council on 6329 8100.

Photo: [Image]

OBERON Arts Council will be holding an Arts and Craft Expo in November titled 'Art Shaping Life'.

The official opening will be Friday, November 8 at 6pm at the Oberon RSL Club.

The exhibition will continue over the Saturday, and Sunday, from 10am to 3pm at the RSL Club.

The exhibition will showcase local talent, with various types of displays such as pottery, painting, embroidery, needlework, plus much more.

Please contact Fran Cherie on [franchise@bigpond.com](mailto:franchise@bigpond.com) for further information.

Photo: [Image]

ON Saturday, June 15 the Friends of the Oberon Library are presenting 'Transported to Oberon - In Story and Song' at the Robert Hooper Community Centre.

As part of the celebrations for Oberon's 150 year anniversary, the FOOLs have prepared an evening of story and song about how and why people arrived and settled in the original Bullock Flats.

Local poets, readers and musicians will entertain throughout the night. Supper will also be served.

Tickets are available for purchase from Cobweb Craft Shop and are \$12 per person. For further details please contact Kathy Sejowitz on 6336 0742.

Photo: [Image]

TICKETS are still on sale at the Council Administration Offices for the Heritage Bush Dance.

The Bush Dance, presented by the Black Springs Progress Association, will be held at the Black Springs Community Hall on Saturday, June 29.

Tickets are \$10 per person and \$25 per family.

This will be a fantastic night out and a definite highlight on the anniversary calendar - be sure to drop by council and purchase your tickets.

## Police briefs

### Truck tips on side

ON Wednesday, May 22 at about 2.30pm a 65-year-old Bathurst man was driving his truck along Duckmole Road when he lost control, tipping the truck on its side.

The man received minor injuries which were treated at Oberon Hospital. No emergency services were contacted, with police being alerted to the collision by hospital staff.

The driver was later interviewed and police investigations are continuing.

### Police search hunter

ON Thursday, May 23 at about 4.15pm

police were called to the Essington State Forest after reports of illegal hunting.

Police located a vehicle, and then shortly after a 24-year-old Oberon man.

The vehicle and the man were both searched, and police located several items of interest.

Further investigations are pending.

### Drink driver arrested

ON Saturday, May 25 at about 10.15pm, police were patrolling the township of Burrage when they stopped a vehicle and performed a random breath test on the driver.

The test returned a positive result and the driver was arrested and taken to Oberon Police Station for a breath

analysis.

This also returned a positive reading, and the 26-year-old Burrage man was issued with a Court Attendance Notice for Novice Range PCA to appear before Oberon Local Court on July 10.

### Car hits tree at Edith

ON Monday, May 27 a driver escaped injury after crashing his vehicle into a tree on the Karanga Wells Road at Edith about 5.30pm.

No emergency services were alerted with the driver arranging to have his vehicle removed from the area.

Police have since spoken with the driver and issued him with a Traffic Infringement Notice.

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**What is council's vision for Oberon's future?**

**ARE you aware of an upcoming**

The centre is open from Monday to Sunday from 9.30am to 5pm.

If Oberon is to survive as a

**Council needs to facilitate development, not raise the bar so high that people throw their hands in the air and decide it is**

lowly rated area and people are already wondering what difference it would make anyway.

Call First National for a Private  
Inspection 623-61685

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**Fred and Gayle Mudgeon.**

**Fred and Gayle Muldoon.**

OBERON COUNCIL

11 JUN 2013

RECEIVED

Dear Mayor John & Oberon Council Members,

I write this letter voicing my disgust that Bathurst Council wants to amalgamate with Oberon Council. I am totally dead set against amalgamating with Bathurst reasons being:-

1. When Bathurst took over Rockley district months on end went on before any work commenced on their roads which were in a state due to the heavy constant haulage of pine into Bathurst. Roads around Rockley are still not completed properly on shoulder edges.

2. With the large amount of pine plantation around the Burrage district our roads need to be continuously maintained due to the large amount of heavy haulage, pines, stock etc that takes place everyday & night. Oberon maintains these regularly.

3. Burrage being approx 95K from Bathurst at the southern end of the shire would be totally forgotten about (except for rating gain) I feel.

4. Approx 6-8 weeks ago there was an article in the Western Advocate stating Bathurst wouldn't be undertaking road works due to wet tracks. Unfortunately I didn't keep that copy as proof & not knowing the heading of the article I'm unable to get a copy. But I have been able to supply an article from the Western Advocate dated 30/4/13. marked \* for interest.

5. Western Advocate stated 20 jobs to go from council no doubt that will happen from the maintenance department.

Yours sincerely

# Western Advocate

Keeping Bathurst informed for 164 years

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

www.westernadvocate.com.au

\$1.60  
(inc GST)

Page 5

**Bike park's progress**

Page 9

**Latest arrivals**

Sport

**Third for Bright**

## Council's Razor Gang

- Rate increase 3.4%
- Water rates and charges up 9.7%
- Sewer rates and charges up 5%
- Waste charges up 5%
- Up to 20 jobs to go
- Roadworks to be scaled back

# ON THE UP AND UP

**Water, sewer general rates all set to rise**

By BRIAN WOOD

COST cutting and a hefty increase in water rates and charges are being proposed by Bathurst Regional Council as it moves to get its 2013-14 budget in order.

Council is set to hold an ordinary meeting tomorrow

evening to give the go-ahead to place the Draft Bathurst 2017 Plan (four year delivery plan and annual operating plan) on public exhibition.

The plan also includes council's revenue policy for the next financial year.

A general purpose rate increase of 3.4 per cent is

proposed – the biggest increase allowable under rate pegging limits imposed by the NSW Government.

Water rates and charges are proposed to rise by 9.7 per cent, and sewer rates and charges and waste charges to rise by five per cent.

■ To page 3



## Choices

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# Crime rates on the way down

## Police say fingerprinting is helping target offenders

By LOUISE EDDY

CRIME rates are dropping across the board in Bathurst and, while police are pleased, they are putting new measures in place to reduce crime even further.

The latest Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report showed Bathurst's crime rates had fallen in almost every category over the past 12 months.

Chifley Command crime manager, Detective Acting Inspector Gareth Smith, attributes Bathurst's figures to police quickly targeting

offenders through public identification, fingerprints and DNA analysis.

Det Act Insp Smith said police are now carrying out mandatory fingerprinting when a person comes into custody.

They also have access to mobile scanning equipment so they can carry out fingerprinting in the street if someone is issued with a court attendance notice.

Det Act Insp Smith said this has had a good flow-on effect, as some people have been linked to numerous break and enters.

This, in turn, is leading to arrests.

Police are also speaking to inmates as they are released into the community.

Det Act Insp Smith said they are, however, concerned that non-domestic related violent assaults are still at a high level.

However, with a new licensing officer in place, meetings have been held with licensed premises to encourage them to be more accountable.

"I think it will make a big difference," he said.

Both the Chifley and Canobolas local area commanders gave a presentation to local football clubs regarding violence on and off the field, warning that police had zero tolerance for violent behaviour.

The number of cases of stealing from motor vehicles is starting to fall, but it is also still too high.

Det Act Insp Smith said the statistics also reveal that in the past year there have been a lot of crimes committed by youths - those under 17 years old.

"Now we have a new youth officer, Constable Matt Holden, who

will be speaking with youths, organising extra patrols and getting them into better programs through the PCYC," he said.

"Hopefully this will have an impact."

However, police are happy with the number of drug busts in the region.

In summary, Det Act Insp Smith said he was very pleased with the way the figures stack up overall.

"Our crime stats are quite low and should continue to fall or hold stable as we identify problem areas," he said.



**COSTLY RESOURCE:** Bathurst Regional Council is proposing an increase in water rates and charges by 9.7 per cent in 2013-14.

## Rates set to rise to balance the budget

From page 1

However, city treasurer Bob Roach is warning that council needs to consider increasing general rates above the "pegged" limit into the future or face the prospect of reducing current service levels.

According to a report to council by Mr Roach, the budget has been prepared during tight financial circumstances.

"Factors such as rate pegging; cost shifting; take-up of additional services; increasing costs such as electricity; and imposition of tasks on councils with no corresponding revenue have continued to place extra pressures on the budget," the report states.

Areas pinpointed for cost savings as part of the budget include \$470,000 by identifying 10 vacant positions which will not be replaced.

Ten further positions are also proposed to go.

There is also the possibility that road enhancement works will be scaled back and council will move to maintain existing road infrastructure rather than undertake extensive upgrades for an \$800,000 saving.

A program to provide underground electricity in the central business district would be axed, saving \$200,000.

Reviewing and completing non-essential road widening and land acquisitions would be significantly scaled back, saving another \$100,000. Cycleway construction would also be scaled back, saving \$50,000.

The Village Improvement Scheme would face cutbacks of \$40,000.

Mr Roach also notes that more than \$250,000 would be provided under Section 356 donations by council to local community groups and organisations.

These go beyond its own operating requirements.

## And in Parkes ...

WHILE Bathurst Regional Council wrestles with its own finances, big decisions are being made in other parts of the region.

Blayney Shire councillors were reported to be looking earlier this month at one of two rate rise options.

Under the larger of the two rises - which aims only to maintain the shire's services - rates would rise by 3.324 per cent in 2013-14, then by 15pc each year for six years.

Parkes Shire Council, meanwhile, wants to increase rates by 13 per cent for each of the next four financial years.

Mayor Ken Keith described the council's move to raise the rates as the most "courageous and significant" of the past 35 years.

## Drugs found in car

A MAN is due to appear in court next week after being charged with drug offences in Molong.

Officers from Canobolas local area command stopped a vehicle driving along Hill Street in Molong about 12.30am on Saturday.

During a search of the vehicle and occupants, police seized a small bag they allege contained cannabis as well as 147 grams of methylamphetamine (ice) that has an estimated potential street value of \$10,000 to \$23,600.

The 33-year-old passenger was arrested and taken to Orange Police Station.

He was charged with supplying an indictable quantity of prohibited drugs and possessing prohibited drugs.

The man faced Orange Bail Court on Saturday and was granted bail to reappear on May 9.

## Facing firearm charges

A 21-YEAR-OLD man was charged with several firearm offences in Orange over the weekend.

Police from the Canobolas local area command responded to a driving complaint at around 4.40pm on Saturday and, upon sighting the vehicle, police allege a blue bag was thrown from it.

Police stopped the vehicle and, while speaking with the driver and passenger, they located the bag, which allegedly contained a firearm.

Both men were arrested and taken to Orange Police Station.

The 21-year-old driver was charged with possessing an unauthorised firearm and not keeping a firearm safely, among other charges.

He appeared in Orange Bail Court on Sunday, was granted bail and is due to appear in Orange Court again on May 9.

The passenger was released without charge.

## Three times the limit

A DISQUALIFIED driver has been charged after driving while more than three times the legal alcohol limit.

The 49-year-old man was stopped for a random breath test on Lloyds Road in Bathurst at about 4pm on Saturday.

Checks revealed the man was disqualified from driving.

He was arrested and underwent a breath analysis, which returned a reading of 0.179.

## Have your say on managing Bathurst's heritage

### Public Meeting

Monday 6 May 2013

5.15pm-7.15pm

Holy Trinity Hall

81 Gilmour Street, Kelso

RSVP to

heritagebathurst@gmail.com

or

Fran 6337 5737

Bathurst Heritage Action Network

## Reconsidering Australia Day announcements

THE announcement of Bathurst's citizen and young citizen of the year in 2013 is set to be given greater significance.

This follows a recommendation to tomorrow night's policy committee of Bathurst Regional Council by the director of corporate services and finance Bob Roach.

He believes council should hold a formal function to announce these prestigious awards when they are presented in December.

"Council would be aware that on Australia Day each year the citizen and young citizen of the year are announced," the report states.

"In recent years an official function announcing these prestigious awards has been held in the Wattle Foyer at the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre.

"This allowed the award recipients to undertake a more formal role in the proceedings on Australia Day rather than being announced

on the day and council hoping they will be in attendance at the event."

Mr Roach notes that in 2012, following a recommendation from the Australia Day Working Party, this event was not held.

"At the recent Australia Day Working Party meeting this matter was reconsidered again," the report continues.

"As a result, it was felt there was some difficulty on Australia Day ensuring that the award recipients were

going to be in attendance at the event.

"It is also felt that it did not give the recipients the ability to fully participate in the day's proceedings.

"The Australia Day Working Party resolved to recommend to council that council return to the previous system of holding an official function to announce the citizen and young citizen of the year award winners and also incorporate the announcement of the Youth Arts Award recipient."

[Show Header](#)**Attention Mayor and General Manager**

**From :** Sam Harris [REDACTED]  
**To :** ";  
**Sent :** 4 March 2013 16:49:08

---

Dear Mayor and General Manager

I saw a Prime7 news item last week in which the egomaniacal mayors of Orange and Bathurst were eyeing off respectively Blayney Shire and Oberon Shire.

I wish to register my strongest possible opposition to any such amalgamation.

I would therefore ask the following:

- a) that Council strongly object to the suggestion made by Monica Morse and inform Bathurst Regional Council of the distress that Council's Mayor caused to Oberon Shire ratepayers by her televised comments.
- b) that Council ensures a plebiscite of Shire's ratepayers occurs before any amalgamation talks are ever held.
- c) that Council confirms it is in a financially independent state (i.e. that it does not need to amalgamate to survive).

My warmest regards

Sam Harris  
[REDACTED]

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OBERON COUNCIL

26 JUN 2013

RECEIVED

PO Box 239  
Oberon NSW 2787  
25/06/2013

Local Government Review Panel  
C/- Locked Bag No.3015  
Nowra NSW 2541

Dear Sir,

Re : Community Submission from Oberon regarding  
Council Amalgamations

Enclosed please find the submission from the Oberon Committee regarding  
Council Amalgamation with Bathurst.

Yours faithfully,

.....  
Brian V Dellow

GM(A)  
EA(1)

-Gout Rel/Loc Reg Li as/ILGRP/

## *Submission to The Independent Local Government Review Panel on Behalf of the Oberon Community*

*Following a public meeting a committee was established to prepare a submission to The Independent Local Government Review Panel on Oberon's opposition to amalgamation with Bathurst. The Committee comprises Brian Dellow, Ian Gordon, Barry Lang, Bob Bearup, Bruce Armstrong and Ray Ross.*

*It is the view of the committee and the townspeople of Oberon that there be NO amalgamation.*

*Our district comprises a rural community of about 5,200 people with a town population of about 2,700 persons .It is situated in the eastern part of the Central Tablelands and is a unique environment perched on the Oberon Plateau at an altitude of 1100m, just west of the Dividing Range. It is not situated on a major highway and may be regarded as an isolated community which may have contributed to its charm and character.*

*It is one of the coldest settled areas in Australia. The climate can be inhospitable and this has led to the development of a close knit community.*

*Oberon was settled very early in the history of Australian exploration by hard working battlers who have fought adversity over many years. The town is now reaping the rewards of their labour, persistence and perseverance. It would be a tragedy if this identity was to be lost in an amalgamation.*

*The Oberon Council was formed over 100 years ago. It is a rural council in step with and in tune with the wishes and desires of rural people and their values. Council staff and local residents are friends and neighbours and hence staff are readily approachable. The community understands the relationship between the forests and the timber industries, agriculture and the environment. There is always cooperation and consultation not confrontation as could be the case if a Council that did not understand the issues were to take over Oberon.*

*The Oberon Councillors are all Independents. They put aside their political affiliations upon election, do not form party political groups and weigh each issue on its true merits. The townspeople appreciate this and this is one of the reasons why the Council enjoys such widespread support. Larger Councils appear to be riven by factions and this is another strong argument against amalgamation.*

*The Oberon Council is well managed and financially healthy. Under the recent Mid-West Regional Performance measures it was given a Sustainability Rating of Sound, whereas Bathurst only achieved a rating of Moderate. In the ten Performance Ratios published by the Independent Local Government Review Panel Oberon outperformed Bathurst in the majority of cases. Coupling Oberon with Bathurst would seem to this committee to significantly lower the financial status of Oberon.*

*Oberon has all the facilities that one expects to find in a town of its size. It has its own water supply, an excellent sewerage system, indoor tennis courts, an undercover multipurpose sports centre, squash courts, sporting fields, net ball courts, an equestrian centre, heated swimming pool, aged care units, hospital and an excellent town library to name just a few. The town boasts an eighteen hole grass green golf course which was created and developed by the community and is still run by the same. In addition it has a very efficient and dedicated SES and a Rural Fire Service Office. Plans have just been completed to build a 66 bed aged care unit.*

*The town has developed a strong progressive and responsible local identity and achieved a demonstrable community pride and optimism which is evidenced by its many strongly viable businesses, its agricultural industry, its medical services, social, sporting, cultural and service clubs and religious organisations. It is this strong sense of local identity that attracts retirees to settle in the town and induces people to establish businesses and invest in the town.*

*To submerge Oberon into a mega-council would not be in the public interest and is not the wish of the people. Amalgamation was unanimously opposed in 2004 in submissions to the State Government, the Minister for Local Government and to the Upper House Committee. Oberon was victorious in this campaign and has prospered in the intervening nine years. Bathurst, despite absorbing Evans Shire has not done as well in this time.*

*At present Oberon has no direct contact with a major state highway. It has always been off the beaten track but recently with the commissioning of the tar-sealed Abercrombie Rd there is now an excellent all weather road to the south connecting Oberon to Goulburn and Canberra and bringing increased traffic and tourists to the town. The town is now on an important road from large centres in the south and no longer a "dead end" destination. This remarkable feat of road upgrade was achieved purely by the persistent efforts, agitation and petitions of the townspeople.*

*Oberon's main industry is timber, particularly softwood, which is grown in the high country and not in the lower altitudes of Bathurst. The Council naturally has a vested interest in maintaining this as a viable business and so has close contacts with the timber/forest industry.*

*The timber mills and associated processing plants in Oberon are not only the biggest industries in the Central Tablelands but the biggest plants of their type in the southern hemisphere. Possibly a billion dollars has been invested in them. They provide employment not only for Oberon but for many neighbouring towns including Bathurst. They are the backbone of the local economy.*

*As well as forestry, agriculture and tourism are the other mainstays of the local economy. Oberon's greatest tourist asset is Jenolan Caves. For many years the caves were the premier tourist destination of the State and today they still draw a vast crowd. Recently the establishment of the Mayfield Gardens to the west of the town has provided another major draw card for tourists. These gardens may eventually become the world's largest cool climate gardens and are projected to significantly contribute to the local economy.*

*Oberon is richly endowed with National Parks. These provide a natural attraction for tourists wishing to experience the joy and exhilaration of the wilderness and a safe habitat for our native animals. They are an easy drive from Sydney and also on the town's doorstep and so provide an opportunity for those businesses catering for the needs of tourists. The vast Kanangra-Boyd National Park, The Abercrombie River National Park and Blue Mountains National Park fringe the eastern and southern boundaries of the Council Area. As well as bringing many people to the area they also provide local employment, as the town boasts a National Park's office. In addition Oberon is often the starting place for visits to nearby attractions such as Evans Crown, Abercrombie Caves and Wombeyan Caves. Here again Oberon has its own unique appeal for those seeking a purely natural experience.*

*Oberon is a mountain town and not a western town and identifies with the cultural mores of the mountains. The Oberon Tourist Association has close links with Blue Mountain's Tourism. The market it has identified is integral with the Blue Mountain's area. The future growth of Oberon's tourist industry is reliant on maintaining that working relationship. This very active local organisation is vehemently opposed to any amalgamation as witnessed by many of its statements in various media.*

*Oberon Business Association also opposes any moves towards amalgamation and has an official policy endorsing such action. Bathurst, has in the past, had little interest in Oberon apart from the economic benefit that Oberon supplies to Bathurst businesses. With amalgamation it is a foregone conclusion that Oberon's main street shops would rapidly decline.*

*Oberon has suffered the loss of several high profile organisations which would better serve the community and State if still sited in Oberon. These have gravitated to Bathurst for no other reason that the staff wanted to live in Bathurst. These were organisations that employed highly skilled and intelligent people who made a meaningful contribution to the wellbeing of the town. The Forestry Office of the State Government, Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust and the Chifley Zone Headquarters of the Rural Fire Service are three that come readily to mind. The Forestry office employed four Foresters, a large office staff and many outdoor staff. The office was situated in the heart of the pine plantations and close to the timber complex. The Caves Trust has moved further from Jenolan, Abercrombie and Wombeyan Caves; hardly a good economic move. The loss of these people is a brain drain on Oberon. If the State Government was serious about decentralisation and maintaining the economic viability of rural areas these organisations would not have been permitted to move. Their loss has been significant to Oberon. If the town is to grow such organisations must remain.*

*Oberon is a high altitude rural town with large areas of State Forests and National Parks. It is the closest rural town to Sydney and as such draws a large number of visitors to view our wonderful sights, to experience the cold climate, to play in the snow and go trout fishing. Oberon has a unique appeal and ambiance that is created by the small personal services provided by the local businesses catering for their needs.*

*When the Forestry Office was vacated the Oberon Council established a Tourist Information and Information Technology Centre in the building. This award winning centre, as well as catering for the needs of tourists also provide classes in basic computing for the community. It will also be the site of the University of the Third Age which is rumoured to start soon.*

*Across the road from the Information Centre is the Common, an area of parkland in the middle of town that has been developed as a picnic area, a children's playground and a resting spot for visitors by the Council, the community and the Oberon Arts Council. It is still being developed and in time will be a very pleasant park and another attraction for the town along with the volunteer Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway and Oberon Museum.*

*If the indicators of community well being are assumed to be economic viability, ease of access to services and facilities, community harmony, active participation in community life, safe area, reasonable cultural development and a strong sense of identification then Oberon scores highly. It is Oberon's small size and the assumption that "everybody knows everybody" that strengthens the community's strong resistance to amalgamation.*

*Strategic planning for the future needs of the community is well handled by the Council so that changing social and behavioural patterns are accommodated. They can focus on the longer term visions, taking into account the environment and directions and forces which are driving change. This would be impossible to implement in a town the size of Oberon if the administration centre was at Bathurst 50 km away.*

*The Oberon Council Office is situated in the heart of the main street. It is easily accessible and if lost it would mean a 100km round trip to Bathurst. In addition the highly skilled and educated staff would also be lost to the district- a further brain drain. Oberon Council is a high employer of women. Once they have been made redundant they would be unlikely to obtain another position in the town. Amalgamation would result in a dramatic loss of local representation.*

*Country local government, because of its closeness to the people, is democratic and just. It is accountable, understandable and equitable. It has a flexibility not available to large organisations and is able to respond to the diverse needs of individuals and the community. It is required to be helpful to every citizen and all businesses both large and small.*

*For these reasons Oberon opposes amalgamation with Bathurst. It deserves to stand alone. This Committee is strongly of the opinion that Oberon should be strengthened by extending the Council boundaries to areas of common interest that would both enhance the well-being and the strength of the town.*

*Brian Dellow*

*Barry Lang*

*Ian Gordon*

*Bruce Armstrong*

*Ray Ross*

*Bob Bearup*

*21<sup>st</sup> June 2013*