

SHIRE RATE RISE

Jerilderie to share burden of rising local government costs

Jerilderie Shire Council is applying for a special rates increase which could see residents paying 20 per cent extra in general rates by 2016/17.

In its draft delivery plan (2014-18), Jerilderie Shire said it would request a 10 per cent increase in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years.

The increase must be approved by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and will also be put to a series of community meetings.

Jerilderie Shire general manager Craig Moffitt said the increase request was about "catching up" after 25 years of low or no rate increases being adopted.

Mr Moffitt said council would also look at cutting staff and operational costs in a number of ways to supplement the proposed increase.

All proposals are currently on public exhibition and will form the basis of a community meeting in Jerilderie next Wednesday.

It will be the first of several meetings to be held within the next nine months.

Jerilderie Shire Council believes the proposed 10 per cent increases over two years is "modest", saying it will only be added to the general rates.

"The general residential rate is \$1400 a year, and the general rate is only \$250 of that," Mr Moffitt said.

"It means the increase, if we are approved for a 10 per cent increase, is only \$25 a year.

"Admittedly, the real effect will be on rural properties who don't have the additional rates and already get a significant bill.

"This proposed increase is about playing catch-up.

"It was 25 years ago the council chose to administer no increase to rates, or an increase smaller than the maximum allowable rate peg.

"Now, 25 years later, it means we are behind the eight-ball.

"With the diminishing income to councils, we consider this a modest rise to be able to maintain services."

Mr Moffitt said rates only produce 24 per cent of council's income, and said the increasing competitiveness for government funds places local services and programs at risk.

"Seeing into the future, we don't wish to get further behind," he said.

"This is about maintaining a standard, and if the community wants us to maintain that they

need to support this proposed 10 per cent increase.

"If there is community support, IPART may look more favourably at our request. If not, services may be jeopardised."

Mr Moffitt said council also proposed a five per cent increase to water usage charges and three per cent increase in other fees and charges to come into effect at the same time.

Rates and charges for the 2014/15 financial year will only be increased by up to 2.3 per cent, which is the state imposed rate cap.

Cost cutting will run in tandem with the proposed rate increases to help build council's income.

Mr Moffitt said lifeguards would no longer be provided to the swimming pool, as lifeguards are not a legal requirement for the facility.

Library opening hours will be

untouched, but librarian staff hours will be altered. He said only one of the two qualified librarians will be rostered on at any one time.

Council will relinquish trusteeship of both The Willows and the Jerilderie Court House, which Mr Moffitt said are rarely used and cost council a significant amount in "standing fees".

Council is also considering the long term options for the RSL Hall, in the meantime slashing the maintenance budget of the seldom-used building.

Mr Moffitt said the planned introduction of a waste depot user charge was also being proposed to offset the costs of manning the facility.

A community meeting on these and other proposals will be held in council's Ian Gilbert Room from 7pm on Wednesday, May 21. All residents and ratepayers are urged to attend.

Southern Riverina
News
14 May 2014

Mixed rate reactions

By Sophie Burge

There have been mixed reactions to Jerilderie Shire Council's proposal to increase rates above the government imposed state cap.

Council last week revealed it would need to increase rates by 10 per cent a year in 2015/16 and 2016/17 in order to maintain community assets and services.

With some residents opposing the increase and others welcoming council's commitment to maintain standards, tonight's public meeting on the increase is ex-

pected to be constructive.

The meeting will also discuss the proposal to increase income in other areas, including introducing a user pays fee at the waste depots and reducing costs by slashing Jerilderie pool lifeguard numbers and reducing librarian working hours, among other things.

Jerilderie Chamber of Commerce president and owner of Sticky Fingers Kathy McFarlane said she feels the increase is "not good for the residents".

She said such a dramatic increase, over the 2.3 per cent cap, would make it hard for a lot of

people in Jerilderie.

"It's going to be another struggle for some finding the money, particularly pensioners," she said.

"They (the council) aren't doing anything for tourism, which is what our town relies on."

"I would like to see the council cut the expenditure to run the council and put the money they save into tourism for the town."

Faye Green from the Jerilderie Motor Inn said she agrees with the shire that increases are necessary to maintain a decent standard.

"Being in business in Jerilderie, I feel that things have to go up. If you want change in the town it has to happen, otherwise jobs are lost and your town dies," she said.

Jerilderie Shire general manager Craig Moffitt said the proposed increase was about "catching up" after 25 years of low or no rate increases.

He maintains the 10 per cent increase on general rates only is a

modest increase, saying the average residential ratepayer would be paying an additional \$25 a year.

The increase must be approved by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, and Mr Moffitt said the application would depend on support from the community.

Business owner and Jerilderie Shire Councillor Gaila Smith said the meeting tonight will be a good opportunity for businesses and residents to raise any concerns they have about the council's proposals.

"It will be explained by the financial people from the council exactly why these increases are necessary," she said.

"Council have gone through the budget process very seriously and responsibly and we encourage all members of the community to attend the meeting."

Tonight's meeting will be held in the shire's Ian Gilbert Room from 7pm.

Southern Riverina
News
21 May 2014



■ Some of 'The Man They Call Banjo' cast and crew.

Banjo, bushdance hit

The presentation of **Banjo & A Bush Dance** at the Jerilderie race course on Saturday night was a triumph.

It was due in no small part to the organisational skills and the hard work put in by the three-woman Four Creeks Festival committee, and their many volunteer helpers for the weekend.

The weather was ideal, the venue was perfect, and the atmosphere just right for the production of *The Man They Call Banjo*.

The play was followed by the bush dance.

More than 240 people came through the gates, some just to the Banjo, others only for the dance, but the majority for the entire night's entertainment.

Congratulations to the actors who told the story of *Waltzing Matilda*, some of whom later appeared as Cora and the Crop Boys, for the bush dance.

What a night it was for the whole family.

Kids both big and small joined in the dancing, learning the steps as they went.

It is understood that when the show finished, the party continued for some with music well into the night at another venue in town.

Winner of the raffle was Lena Brennan, and the winners of the most appropriate attire for the night were Les Hercus (stockman), Sonia Frost (stockwoman), Brooke Pitt (country lass), and



the next event from Four Creeks Festival.

The Jerilderie library's sixth Biggest Morning Tea was held at the library on last Thursday.

It was a great success, with more than 40 people enjoying the social afternoon.

Tables laden with delicious goodies were set up in the Monash Room, with guests spilling out into the sunshine on the Powell St side of the library.

A band of volunteers helped deliver orders to 31 businesses in town, and Rhonda and Catie are happy to report that over \$1700 was raised for the Cancer Council from the day.

Thanks have been expressed to everyone who volunteered their time, baked food, donated cash, and provided goods for the 68 continuous raffles.

Thanks to IGA for sponsoring the tea and coffee, and to Pine Rise Pumps and Jerilderie Newsagency for the lucky door prize, which was won by Karen (Neville) Sleeman.

Happy 40th birthday to Helene Mortlock, for Saturday.

Helene celebrated on

what families spend is donated to the pre-school.

The Jerilderie Catholic Women's League will be holding its street stall this Friday, starting at 8.30am.

The gremlins got into the works last week, leading you to believe that the stall was last Friday, when in fact that stall was for the Country Women's Association.

If anyone has baking or produce for the CWL stall, it will be gratefully received.

The Jerilderie Shire public meeting held in the Ian Gilbert room last Wednesday night was attended by nearly 60 urban and rural ratepayers, and councillors and staff.

Deputy Mayor Ruth McRae welcomed everyone to the meeting, with an apology from Mayor Terry Hogan.

The object of the meeting was to discuss the draft 10-year financial plan for the shire, which had been promulgated prior to the meeting.

General manager Craig Moffitt outlined all the proposals, and gave the audience the opportunity to ask questions.

The robust meeting lasted over two hours, with much food for thought concerning the future of our shire, and more work yet to be done to arrive at a consensus on a rate rise.

11 year girl - Lily Sharp and Nicola Denny; 11 year boy - Will Sexton; Junior girl - Courtney Lunn; Junior boy - Edward Hayes.

Eleven athletes from St Joseph's will attend the Diocesan Carnival in Albury in June.

They are Sophie Roe, Brigit Hamilton, Elle Rochford, Elouise Barlow, Tex Flack, Ben Anthony, Todd McNamara, Ben Neessen, Jayden Catena, Glen DiLullo, and Riley Belling.

Good luck to those athletes.

June birthdays at St Joseph's school are Nathan Sleeman 5th, Todd McNamara 7th, Brock Kocks 19th, Hunter Dellar 20th, Brigit Hamilton 22nd, James Mortlock 22nd, and Sarah Wettenhall 29th. Best wishes for great days.

Jerilderie Public School students Josh Ray, Brad Aylett, Ryan Aylett, Justin Lawton, Zander Nash, Rory Knight and Alex A'Vard recently attended a try-out in Berrigan to be part of the combined schools football team.

They went on to train last Wednesday, with the possibility of being selected to go the next level in Deniliquin.

Members of the Jerilderie Country Women's Association went to the state conference

Southern Riverina News
28 May 2014

Cuts concerns

'General unhappiness' with plans to increase rates

By Sophie Burge

Jerilderie Shire Council says it will hold further meetings on proposed plans to increase its income, after describing a "general feeling of unhappiness" at last week's public meeting.

Council has proposed to increase rates by 10 per cent a year in both 2015-16 and 2016-17.

It also recommended cost cutting measures which included only having one librarian rostered on at one time, introducing a user pays

waste depot model and re-moving lifeguard positions for the Jerilderie pool.

Jerilderie Shire general manager Craig Moffitt maintains the changes are necessary to ensure council can continue meeting community standards.

He said a combination of low to no rate increases over 25 years and ever reducing government funding has put the council in a dire financial situation.

Mr Moffitt said while residents at the meeting understood council's position, the cost cutting measures were

not wholeheartedly supported.

He said the proposed increases to rates and changes to library staffing were particular sticking points at the meeting.

"Concern was expressed from the rural ratepayers that they're shouldering the burden, as the biggest financial portion of the rates comes from them," he said.

"Other planned proposals generally had support at the meeting, however concerns were expressed about reduction in staffing at the library.

"We plan to host another

public meeting because we need to reflect on consequences on the Federal Government's proposal to not index the financial assistance grants, which is one of our major sources of income.

"This will have a very dramatic effect on our ability to provide services, so we'll need to take that back to the community as well."

The proposed 10 per cent rate increase for future financial years is significantly higher than the state imposed 2.3 per cent cap.

Council must have the approval of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tri-

bunal to pass on the increase.

Mr Moffitt said it would make up much of the losses, and that support from the community would help the process.

While the increases and cuts are yet to be officially adopted by Jerilderie Shire Council, he said it would proceed with one income raising initiative.

Council will introduce a user pays system at the waste depot, which Mr Moffitt said is soon to be a state government requirement.

"At the moment people

pay within their rates, however this new system is part of a state government requirement that is just around the corner.

"We've been preparing for it and it will be introduced this year."

An official start date of the user pays system is yet to be confirmed. A pricing structure is also yet to be released.

Mr Moffitt said as part of the new structure and government requirements, the waste depot would be managed by a council employee.

A date for the next public meeting had not yet been announced.

Southern Riverina
News
28 May 2014

Shire rate opposition

By Sophie Burge

Jerilderie Shire Council is not yet discounting a seven per cent rate increase from July next year, despite receiving 23 official submissions against the move.

The letters of opposition were received during public exhibition of the 2014/2015 Operation Plan, which sets in place the rate capped 2.3 per cent increase for the next 12 months.

Jerilderie Shire general manager Craig Moffitt said the community responses will be taken in to account, but said there's still time to gauge com-

munity opinion on the special rates increase.

"There's no telling yet what effect the submissions will have on council's decision on the rate increase proposal, which will take effect in July 2015," Mr Moffitt said.

"We have just commenced the community consultation required, which is to be completed in time for a potential application to the minister before the end of February."

"Ratepayers should be aware that this is only the beginning of the process."

"Before a final decision is made on rate increases to commence on July 1 2015, council will need to have a clear record of the level of support for the proposal."

"All current and future submissions will be taken into consideration when dealing with this matter up until the date for submission to the Minister for approval in February 2015."

Despite the submissions against the seven per cent increase, Mr Moffitt maintains they will be necessary to ensure services can continue to be delivered.

Mr Moffitt said the rate increase would allow the council to "catch up" after 25 years of low or no rate increases being adopted.

He said council's financial stress has exacerbated by the Federal Government's decision to freeze any Financial Assist-

ance Grant increased for the next three years.

"The Federal Government's decision to freeze Financial Assistance Grants will have a compounding effect on council's consideration of its income stream," Mr Moffitt said.

"Council's prime objective is that there be no reduction in service levels and asset maintenance standards, despite expected reduction in income."

Mr Moffitt said council is still working on a public consultation timetable to further discuss the proposed special rate increases for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, which could see ratepayers paying up to 20 per cent extra in rates. A survey is also being considered.

Southern Riverina News
2 July 2014

Residents urged to have say on rate rise

Jerilderie ratepayers and residents are encouraged to attend a meeting in the Ian Gilbert room at the Civic Hall, on Thursday, September 25, from 7pm.

The meeting will continue discussions on the proposals in the Shire Management Plan for the next year, to increase rates and dispose of unused buildings.

Feedback on the response from ratepayers to the questionnaire distributed with Council's rate notices will also be provided to the meeting.

Council's viability will depend on actions taken in the next few years on financial matters.

Sympathy is extended to Fleur Bayliss, Peter, Heather, Debbie, Penny, and their families following the death of their husband, father and grandfather, Peter Bayliss, on Thursday.

Peter's graveside funeral is tomorrow at 11am, at the Jerilderie cemetery.

The September meeting of the Hospital Auxiliary will be held this Friday (a day later than usual) at 2pm in the meeting room at the Community Centre.

The Jerilderie Hospital Auxiliary will be holding a Blumes Fashion showing of Spring/Summer fashions, on October 9, at 10am, in



the Community Centre. Mark your calendars.

The Auxiliary held a successful street stall on Friday, with raffle winners being Alison Newton and Lucy Sweeney.

The Taste Test Holiday Program is running this week at the Jerilderie Racecourse.

Tearooms, from September 23 to 25, from 9am to 4pm each day.

The three-day program, assisted by youth teams from Wesley Mission Sydney, includes sports, cooking, knitting and much more.

School students of all ages are welcome. Registration forms are available from Kat Creek on 0409 207 252.

Intereach is conducting another free Art in the Park on the second Wednesday of the school holidays, at Monash Park and oval.

Mark your calendars for October 1, from 10.30am to 12.30pm. To book contact 5890 6200, or visit the Finley Community Hub.

Parishioners of St Joseph's Catholic Church and community members are invited to join families for the Confirmation Mass, at 11.30am on October 12, and to stay for the luncheon to follow the celebrations.

Anyone wishing to attend the lunch is asked to contact the school as soon as possible.

Applications are invited for the Sir John Monash Education Bursary, valued at \$2000. Applicants should submit an essay on the subject:

My observations on living in the Jerilderie District, and where to from here?

Entry is open to long term residents of Jerilderie Shire who are considering entering into post secondary education through university, college or TAFE, or an approved course of formal training with a registered training organisation.

The bursary is to assist with personal costs associated with course expenses.

The successful applicant will be announced at the Sir John Monash dinner and lecture, to be held on Saturday, November 15.

Entries close on October 23 at the Jerilderie Shire. More information available from the Council's website www.jerilderie.nsw.gov.au.

The Jerilderie branch of the Catholic Womens' League will hold its annual general meeting on Thursday, October 2, with a luncheon at the Jerilderie Hotel.

As there will be no 10am Mass on Thursday for the next two weeks, members are asked to meet at the hotel at 10.30am.

Please advise Chris Ellis, 5886 1415, this Friday if you would like to attend.

An enthusiastic group of people of all ages met at the Jerilderie Sports Club recently to form a drama/music group.

Ross Whittaker, who has had a long involvement with FADS (Finley Amateur Dramatic Society), came along to offer helpful advice.

The group met because of a perceived lack of activities (other than sport) in which young local people can participate.

The first meeting saw the formation of a committee which will now look into forming a registered body. It will be all go from there.

If you have any inclination to treat the boards, to act, sing, dance, or all three, you might go along to the next meeting at the club this Sunday, September 27, and offer your support.

Further information may be available from

Kylie Bryce, or Rhonda Lisa Brackenrig.

Sympathy is extended to Richard, Andrew and David Sleigh and their families following the recent death of their mother, Shirley.

Sympathy is also extended to the Bill Robertson family following the death of Bill's brother-in-law, Ron Smith, last week.

Ron had been a resident of the local Health Service for a number of years. His funeral was held in Minchinbury yesterday.

Irene and Ross Smith are grandparents again, with the early but safe arrival of Lincoln Ross, born to Katie, in Melbourne on September 11.

School holidays have begun, and there will be a few changes at St Joseph's Catholic School next term.

Miss Loretta McNamara (Mrs Walker) will be taking maternity leave for the rest of the year. Her position has been advertised.

Miss Clare McNamara has completed her internship at the school and is soon to be a fully fledged teacher. We wish her well for the future.

Graduation day for St

Joseph's School will be Tuesday, December 16.

Students from both schools attended an end of term Ecumenical service in the United Church on the last day of term.

St Joseph's students Elle, Brodie and Elouise were part of a Finley/Jerilderie team of 11 girls who participated in a Netball Gala Day in Albury recently.

The team won all five games and came out overall winners of the day after a play-off game.

The Public School production of *Robin Hood and Friar Tuck* was a huge success with rave reviews from those who attended the recent performances.

Everyone was delighted by the talent on show, and thanks have been expressed to all the backstage and support people who helped to make it such a memorable event.

Woodcutting for the Combined Schools Festival will be held at Barlows on Sunday, October 5.

People with chainsaws and enthusiasm are invited to go along and help cut the wood, which is always a good money raiser for the fete.

The Jerilderie Fishing Club is holding a free kids fishing competition this Sunday from 10am in the Jerilderie Sports Club area. A free barbecue lunch is available at 1pm.

Kids up to 16 are invited to take part, with under 10s to be accompanied by an adult. Take your own fishing gear and bait.

The Four Creeks Festival, which ran *The Man They Call the Banjo* so successfully in May, is gearing up for *A Day on the Bong*, on November 2.

For further information contact www.fourcreeksfestival.com. Brochures are also available at the Jerilderie library.

The library is holding a book sale on October 3, with tables of books to be displayed from 11am to 4pm, under the verandah.

Catie and Rhonda are also inviting you to another Surf Club at the library for a four week program starting October 9. To register, contact 5886 1868, or drop into the library. There are limited spaces.

Jerilderie Tennis Club is holding a Junior registration/family fun morning on October 11, from 10am until noon. Call Sally on 5886 1260 to reserve a spot.

Junior tennis, which will run for six weeks, will start next term on October 22 at 3.45pm.

Junior tennis is free for ages 5-12yrs, providing you are a junior member of the club.

Adult tennis will start on October 24 at 7pm. Open to adults and secondary school kids, who can play if one parent is playing.

Southern Riverina
24 September 2014

Huge costs force Jerilderie Shire to . . .

Hand back buildings

By Sophie Burge

Jerilderie Shire Council has decided to relinquish care and control of the Court House and The Willows to ensure it remains financially viable.

General manager Craig Moffitt said both would be handed back to the Crown.

It would provide a significant cost saving under council's management plan for the current financial year.

Mr Moffitt said the decision is partly in response to the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' plan, which recommends local government reform.

Council is also pushing ahead with plans to demolish the under-utilised Jerilderie RSL hall as an extra cost saving measure.

"The Court House and The Willows are currently owned by the Crown and managed by council, and have not been used by the Jerilderie community for some years," Mr Moffitt said.

"Even unused, the buildings cost council a significant amount in insurance and maintenance."

Handing the buildings back means the ongoing costs to upkeep the buildings will be the responsibility of the NSW Government.

He said the government intends to sell-on the buildings, but "not for some time" due to the inability of staff to attend the sale.

Mr Moffitt said council has offered to arrange the sale on the government's behalf if the re-sale was to take too long.

He also said council intends to

work with the government to ensure the Court House can be retained as a community venue, particularly considering its Ned Kelly history.

A new home for the museum items from The Willows is also being sought. The items are being held in storage.

In the meantime, council will continue with its plans to demolish the RSL hall.

"The RSL hall is one such building which has now been listed for demolition as council's preferred option," Mr Moffitt said.

"It requires significant expenditure for repairs which cannot be funded or justified. The community has indicated a broad acceptance of this proposal, understanding the need to cut costs."

Southern Riverina News
12 November 2014