

# Welcome to the Tumbarumba Shire Council's **'Fit for the Future'** Community Survey

The NSW Government is looking at ways that councils can better serve their communities and be sustainable in the longer term. They have developed a program called "Fit for the Future". Every Council in NSW is being asked to put forward its Fit for the Future proposal by June 30 this year. In response to the NSW Government's Fit for the Future program, Tumbarumba Shire Council seeks to better understand community views on:

- The preferred future direction for Tumbarumba Shire Council and particularly residents' views on amalgamation compared with the status quo.
- Determining residents' views on regional cooperation.

This survey is open to all residents of Tumbarumba Shire over the age of 18 years. We sincerely thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important to determine the future.

The recommendations that have been made for Tumbarumba Shire Council by the Independent Review Panel are either that:

- we remain a standalone Council because 'it is debatable whether a merger is a realistic option' (words from the final panel report);
- we merge with Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils.

The following series of questions will help Council understand residents' views on a preferred option.

1 What is your primary regional centre? Please tick one box

- ☐ Albury/Wodonga
  - ☐ Wagga Wagga
  - ☐ Tumut

2) Where do you shop locally/ access services?

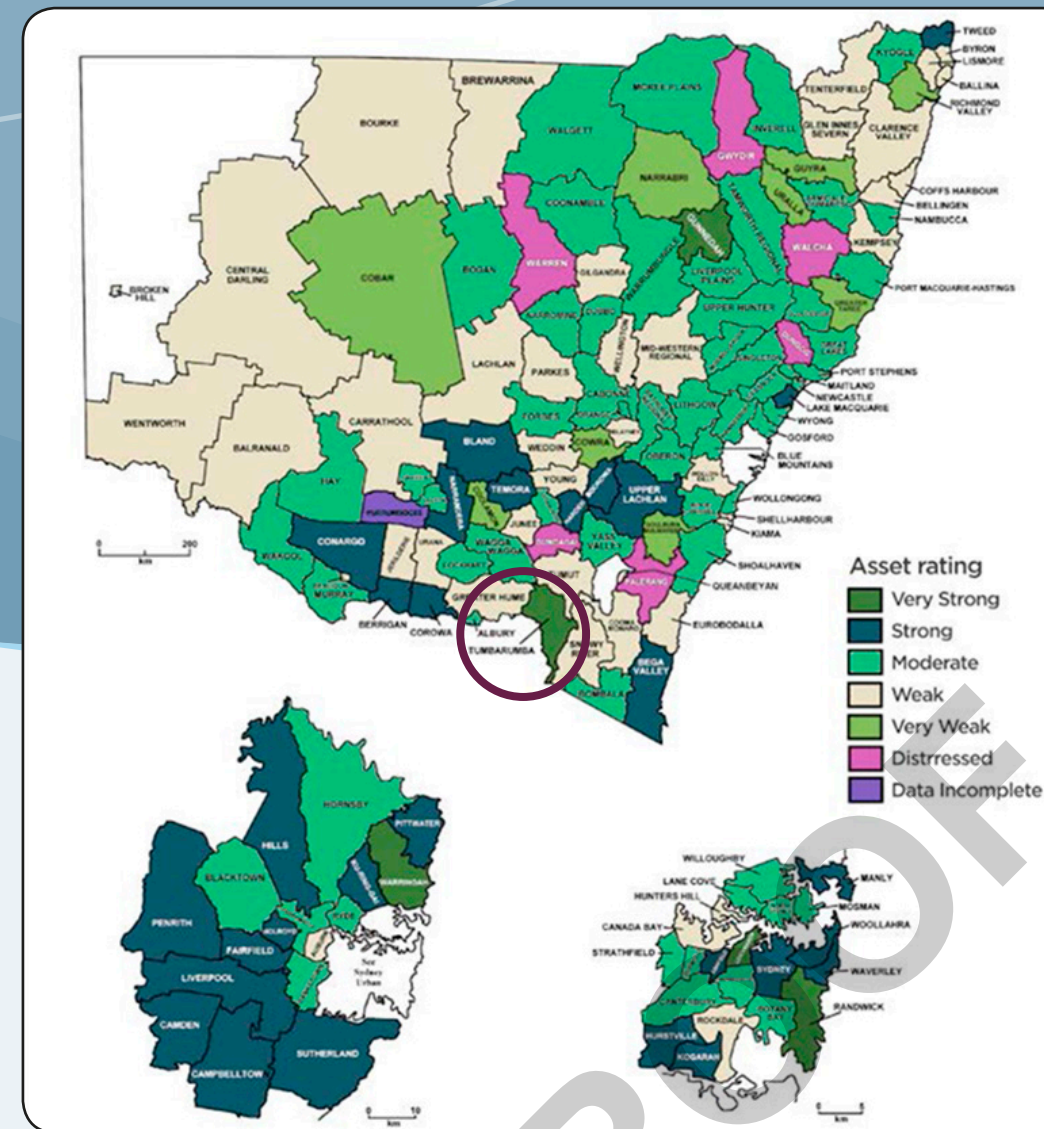
- ☐ Tumbarumba  
☐ Corryong  
☐ Khancoban  
☐ Other (please specify).....

**3** If there was to be an amalgamation with Tumut/Gundagai Shire Councils, what do you believe the benefits potentially would be? *Tick any that apply*

- ☐ More efficient/productive/better use of resources and services
  - ☐ Better facilities and/or services
  - ☐ Regional solutions to local issues
  - ☐ Reduced bureaucracy and reduced staff numbers
  - ☐ Less politicians/ councillors
  - ☐ Lower rates
  - ☐ More influence to attract funding or attention from State and Federal Governments
  - ☐ Simplify or reduce the layers of government
  - ☐ I can see no benefits
  - ☐ Other (please specify).....

4 What would be the major disadvantages? Tick any that apply

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefits unknown/ can't see any benefits                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A bigger Council would be less efficient/ too bureaucratic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Not needed/ happy with the way things are                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Local issues won't be understood/ loss of local identity   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bigger is not always better                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of representation/ loss of voice                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Little community of interest                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of local business                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Resources will go to the largest centre\                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Doubts about cost savings/ waste of time and/or money      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I can see no disadvantages                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify).....                                |



**Appendix 2 (left):**  
NSW LGA's Infrastructure  
Assessment

**Appendix 3 (right):**  
Combined Infrastructure and  
Asset Management Result

	DLG 1	DLG 2	DLG 3	DLG 4	DLG 5	DLG 6	DLG 7	DLG 8	DLG 9	DLG 10	DLG 11
Infrastructure /Financial Assessment											
Strong/Very Strong	1										
Strong/Strong						1					
Very Strong/Sound		1	1					1			
Strong/Sound		3	2	1				1		2	
Moderate/Sound									1		
Very Strong/Moderate			1								1
Strong/Moderate		3	2		2	1	1			2	
Distressed/Strong								1			
Moderate/Moderate		4	5	11	3		3		3	5	5
Weak/Moderate		1	3	4						2	2
Very Weak/Moderate									1		1
Strong/Weak			1				2		2	1	1
Moderate/Weak		2	2	3	1	1	1		1	1	2
Weak/Weak				4		1		2	3	4	4
Very Weak/Weak				1					1	1	1
Distressed/Weak									1		1
Moderate/Very Weak				1	1				1	3	2
Weak/Very Weak			3	1				1	2	2	
Very Weak/Very Weak				1						1	
Distressed/Very Weak									1	2	
Weak/Distressed									1		
Very Weak/Distressed				1							
* Excludes 1 council	1	14	17	30	8	3	8	4	20*	26	20



# 'Fit for the Future'

## Community Survey & Information Bulletin

May 2015

**TUMBARUMBA SHIRE COUNCIL** is facing the biggest decision about its future in its history. Please take the time to read this important information and to have your say on the future of our Shire. All residents are invited to complete the enclosed survey, which will help Council understand the wishes of the community regarding the future structure of Tumbarumba Shire Council.

You may have heard about NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' reform package for local government. This is the Government's response to the findings of a comprehensive 3 year independent review of local government.

The panel found that more than one third of councils in NSW are facing financial problems, and that growth in Sydney is being constrained by outdated council boundaries dating back to the days of the horse and cart.

The panel concluded that the system of local government in NSW needs to change, and that some of that change should involve the structural reform of councils.

### What does this mean for Tumbarumba Shire Council?

There are substantial financial incentives on offer by the NSW Government under the reform program. The Government has offered up to \$13 million for regional councils who decide to merge, to assist with the cost of merging. Smaller councils (<10,000 people) will also be eligible for grants from a \$4 million innovation fund to develop new ways of working.

The independent review panel recommended that Tumbarumba Shire Council either:

- Remain a standalone Council because 'it is debatable whether a merger is a realistic option' (wording from the final panel report); or
- Merge with Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils.

Councils have been asked to submit a proposal to the independent expert panel by 30 June 2015 on how

they will become Fit for the Future. They will need to show that they have the scale and capacity consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Panel and how they will become and remain financially sustainable, efficient and deliver effective services and infrastructure.

It is important that you, our residents and ratepayers have your say on what you believe is the best option for the residents of Tumbarumba Shire Council in the future.

The enclosed survey is designed to give you a say on the future of local government in our Shire. It contains statements that may describe potential benefits of a merger and potential disadvantages. Council is trying to gauge the view of residents in relation to these. The results of this survey will be collated and then summarised as part of Tumbarumba Shire Council's plan to be fit for the future.



What does ‘Fit for the Future’ mean?

The ‘Fit for the Future’ reform package is focused upon four key themes:

- Scale and capacity
- Financial sustainability
- Infrastructure management
- Efficiency

A number of benchmarks have been set that address the above themes. Councils are required to provide financial ratios that will be assessed against these benchmarks. Councils are also required to show how they will become/remain fit for the future by meeting the required criteria.

Is Tumbarumba Shire Council ‘Fit for the Future?’

Council is confident that it meets the ‘Fit for the Future’ requirements for the above themes, with the exception of ‘scale’ (the benchmark for ‘scale’ is that a council has at least 10,000 residents). In fact, we are outperforming many of the large city councils in the areas of financial sustainability and asset management, as outlined below.

Tumbarumba Shire Council has a financial position that has been independently assessed by the Treasury Corporation of NSW as ‘strong’ with a likely future outlook of ‘sound’. In April 2013, T-Corp issued all Local Government jurisdictions in NSW with reports on their current financial status; long-term financial management and asset management forecasts. Only two Local Government jurisdictions received ‘strong’ ratings in the Financial Stability Report - the City of Sydney and Tumbarumba Shire Council (appendix 1). Council was also given an asset management rating of ‘very strong’ by the recent Division of Local Government Review (appendix 2). Together, these two ratings place Tumbarumba Shire Council’s financial and asset management capacity at equal third in the state (appendix 3).

In large organisations such as Council, there is always room for efficiency improvements, and Tumbarumba Shire Council will be focusing on ways to improve efficiency in its proposal for becoming Fit for the Future. One way of improving efficiency is to share resources through a ‘Joint Organisation’, such as the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC).

What is a joint organisation?

A “Joint Organisation” is a way for councils to collaborate on regional priorities and to share certain resources.

Tumbarumba Shire Council is a member of the Riverina Regional Organisation of Council (REROC) with 11 other Councils. The member councils work together to gain economies of scale, to undertake joint projects, for advocacy to the State and Federal Governments and to access expertise and resources that might not be available to individual councils.

The State Government has embraced the REROC concept and is proposing to legislate to mandate membership and a strengthened role for regional Joint Organisations similar to the REROC model.

It is possible that increasing regional cooperation may deliver the scale and capacity to councils that the State Government is seeking without the need for amalgamation of isolated rural councils such as Tumbarumba Shire Council.

What is a rural council?

The Fit for the Future process recognises that small rural councils face unique challenges, and a ‘one size fits all’ model will not meet the needs of many small rural communities.

The Independent Panel originally proposed a separate ‘Rural Council Model’, but consultation with the sector has shown that the needs of rural communities are so diverse, that a single legislated model, creating a new type of council, may not be the best solution. This is no longer being proposed.

Instead, councils now have the option of preparing a Rural Council Proposal to show how they will improve performance within their current structure. This allows them to choose from solutions, developed through consultation, that particularly suit small rural communities.

There will be no change to the way that councils are named, nor mandated changes to operations.

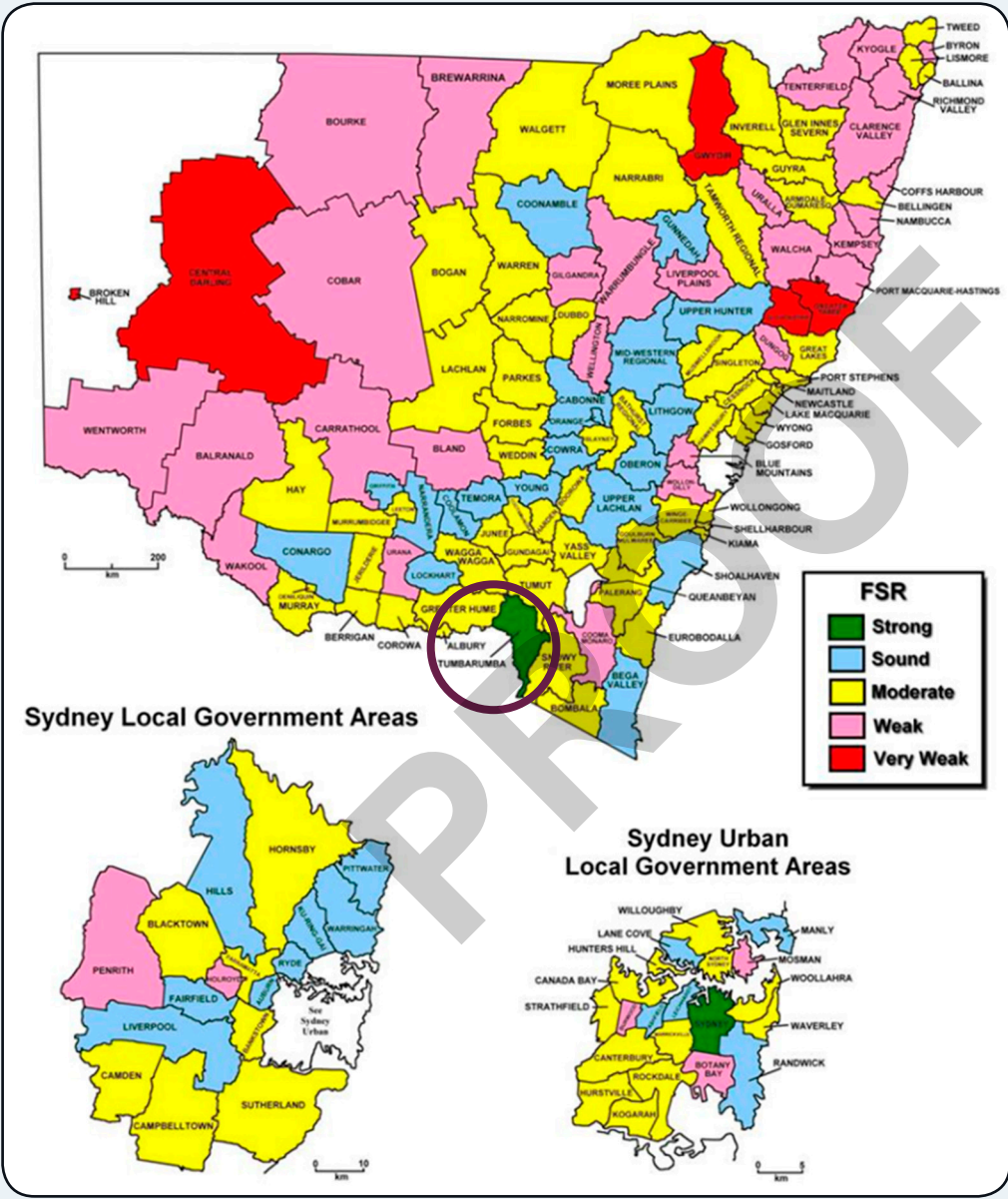
How can I find out more and get involved?

The website [www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au) has extensive information on the fit for the future program.

Council is encouraging residents to complete the attached survey (either on paper or online) by Friday 29th May. The online survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DFXJL32> or click on the link via the Tumbarumba Shire Council homepage

at [www.tumbashire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.tumbashire.nsw.gov.au). In the last week of May, public meetings will be held around the Shire to obtain feedback from the community. In mid June, there will be a public workshop to review Council’s proposed improvement program.

In the meantime, if you have any further questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to contact Council on (02) 6948 9100.



Appendix 1 (left):

T-Corp Financial Sustainability Report

Tumbarumba Shire Council is a member of the Riverina Regional Organisation of Council (REROC) with 11 other Councils including Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Greater Hume, Gundagai, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Urana and Wagga Wagga.

The member councils work together to gain economies of scale, to undertake joint projects, for advocacy to the State and Federal Governments and to access expertise and resources that might not be available to individual councils.

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5 Which of the following would you prefer to deliver scale and capacity?

☐ Increased regional collaboration through a strengthened Joint Organisation

☐ Amalgamation

☐ Don't know

6 To what extent do you generally support or oppose Tumbarumba Shire Council amalgamating with Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils?

☐ Strongly oppose

☐ Slightly oppose

☐ Neutral or unsure

☐ Slightly support

☐ Strongly support

Please give reasons for your response .....

.....

.....

7 Do you have any other comments or questions?

.....

.....

Statistical Information

To assist Council in collating the results of this survey, could you please answer a few questions about yourself for statistical purposes.

8 What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

9 What is your age?

☐ 18 to 24

☐ 25 to 39

☐ 40 to 59

☐ 60 to 74

☐ 75 or older

10 What is your postcode?.....

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will assist Council in preparing its submission to the State Government. Please mail your completed survey by Friday 29th May (no postage stamp is required) to:

Tumbarumba Shire Council  
Reply Paid 61  
P.O. Box 61  
Tumbarumba NSW 2653

Alternatively, please drop your survey in to the front counter at the Tumbarumba Shire Council offices, Cnr Bridge and Winton Streets, Tumbarumba.