

☒ News ☐ Business

## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Council rates could skyrocket

By RYAN YOUNG

April 18, 2012, 6:14 a.m.



**FACING FINANCIAL FACTS:** Blayney Shire Council general manager Glenn Wilcox, environmental services director Leon Rodwell and corporate services director Anton Franze add the finishing touches to council's 2012-13 budget and related documents.

BLAYNEY Shire Council has been asked to consider adopting a long term financial plan that recommends a 100 per cent increase in general rates over the next 10 years.

And if the council wants to meet community expectations and its own obligations, it could find that task "very difficult" if the plan isn't adopted in its current form, general manager Glenn Wilcox has advised.

Council staff presented councillors with a series of documents on Monday, in response to new state government requirements that require councils to plan for their short, medium and long term futures.

A community strategic plan, four year delivery program, operation plan and budget for 2012-13, asset management plan, four year workforce plan and 10 year long term financial plan were handed down as part of the integrated planning and reporting process.

The documents, which have been three years in the making, provide an insight into council's current position, and what the future will look like for the Blayney Shire.

Modelling contained in the long term financial plan revealed that if council was to meet the objectives of its community strategic plan - without raising rates above the increase limit set by the state government - the budget would be plunged into successive deficits totalling over \$25 million by 2021.

In response to the figures, council staff proposed two special rate variations be applied in order to deliver the community strategic plan, improve services and meet community expectations on issues such as improving local roads.

The first proposed rate variation, which seeks to separate the mining rate from the general rate, gained the support of councillors on Monday night.

It's expected to deliver council an additional \$1.57 million in revenue for the next financial year, which will help fund efforts to address the growing road infrastructure backlog.

The other special rate variation is to the general rate and, if adopted, will affect all ratepayers from July 1 next year.

It proposes a seven per-cent increase to rates each year until 2021, on top of the state government set rate pegging limit - assumed, in the council modelling, to average 3.3 per cent annually.

"The proposed special rate variations have been identified to ensure that council can meet its obligations for asset maintenance and cost of service provision as expected by the community....," the general manager said.

"By adopting the long term financial plan, including the special rate variations, council will ensure that the current assets (roads, sewerage system, buildings, parks and reserves) are maintained and receive upgrades to meet the community expectations and service delivery identified in the community strategic plan.

"By not adopting the long term financial plan, council cannot meet the long term provision of services and will need to prioritise works to meet a deterioration of services and maintenance within its budget capacity."

At Monday's council meeting, councillors voted to put the budget and operations plan for 2012-13 on public exhibition.

Councillor Scott Ferguson moved a motion that was unanimously supported, to defer council exhibiting or making a decision on the other documents, because he felt he did not have time to "look over" the detail.

All councillors also agreed to meet with staff in the coming weeks for a workshop on the plans.

In order for both special rate variations to be implemented, council must gain approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and the Minister for Local Government.

Council said Newcrest Mining has expressed support for the mining rate variation plan.

The general manager also told council that he wasn't sure if IPART would approve the proposed special rate variations.

"If they don't get through we'd have to undertake a review of priorities and adjust plans accordingly," Mr Wilcox said.

Despite the volume of information presented, Monday's council meeting lasted around 38 minutes.

The remaining plans that are not on exhibition, including the long term financial plan that proposes the special general rate variation, must be finalised and adopted by June 30.

19 April, 2012 2:18PM AEST

## Blayney rate hikes

**In order to maintain essential services in the Blayney Shire rates might be raised at an annual rate of more than 10 per cent over the next decade according to a proposal before the council.**

A report into the Shire's long term financial plan has found that the council needs the additional funds in order to cover the cost of operations such as community services and road maintenance.

The Blayney Shire says the situation has arisen due to rate pegging by the New South Wales Government, which has taken away the council's capacity to account for long term growth and service provisions.

President of the NSW Shire Association, Ray Donald, says that Blayney Shire is not the only council in trouble.

"It's a problem that all councils have, and whatever rate pegging remains in its current form, this will continue," he said.

"Blayney, I think, are doing what a lot of other councils are considering... because the income they're getting from rates and other revenue just doesn't meet the essential costs of the service provisions and other areas of responsibility that councils in the state have."

The recommendation will be discussed at a workshop before councillors make a decision on the matter.



Blayney Shire may need to raise rates. (Daniel Hamilton: ABC Local)



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☒ News ☐ Business**Blayney Chronicle** ([/](#))

# Rate rise dilemma facing candidates

By RYAN YOUNG

Aug. 23, 2012, 12:30 a.m.



SEPTEMBER 8 is polling day

THE new Blayney Shire Council elected on September 8 will have to decide whether it will move to increase rates by an average of around 10 per cent each year for seven years from July 2013.

All current councillors, including election candidates Geoff Braddon, Scott Ferguson, Kevin Radburn and Allan Ewin, voted to adopt council's long term financial plan at a meeting in June.

The plan advocates a seven per cent rate increase every year, on top of the state government set annual rate pegging limit of an estimated three per cent.

It is claimed this could lead to a general increase of at least 100 per cent over 10 years, if the rate hikes were to continue beyond the long term financial plans 2021/22 end daet.

Councillor Geoff Braddon said the rate hike was not in stone because it is subject to approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

He said when he and other councillors voted to approve the long term financial plan, it was not yet known that the council had been given the go-ahead to gouge an extra \$18 million out of Cadia in rates over 10 years.

"I'm against the seven per cent now that we've got the \$18 odd million from Cadia.... we never knew that we had got that when the long term plan had to be sent to the state government," Cr Braddon said

"Also it was widely known that the even though this was approved, the new council would have control over whether or not the rate increase happens because the long term plan has to be reviewed and can be changed by the new council."

Cr Braddon said he'd represent the views of shire residents when the new council looks at the long term plan.

"But I will say this - it's either increase the rates or who do we want to amalgamate with," he said.

"If you don't want increased rates then we need to look at expanding the council, taking some of Cabonne, Cowra or Orange and maybe even Bathurst.

"With this local government review things will not and cannot stay the same as they are."

Councillors Scott Ferguson, Allan Ewin and Kevin Radburn have also vowed to represent the views of the community when it comes to increasing rates by seven per cent.

No election candidate will firmly commit to a position on the issue, with many saying they will wait until a new council is elected and "the books are looked at" before committing to a decision. Many candidates have described the seven per cent amount as "too much".

Election candidate John Collins said he thinks a seven per cent special rate increase is "over the top".

"Maybe if you lifted it 3.5-4 per cent people wouldn't be as critical," he said.

If the special rate increase is not adopted, it is expected the council would have to cut services or not proceed with planned infrastructure projects in the future.

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## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Ewin hopes for second term on council

By RYAN YOUNG

Aug. 30, 2012, 12:30 a.m.

BLAYNEY Shire Councillor Allan Ewin has distinguished himself from typical election candidates by declaring he won't stand for re-election on any particular platform.

Cr Ewin said if re-elected he'll only be one councillor and will work as part of a team, negotiating positions and compromising if necessary.

"I'm not standing on any one particular platform because you can't do that - you're only one person and you're a part of a team," he said.

Despite distinguishing himself from other candidates, Cr Ewin said he had many ideas to help move the shire forward.

"We need to change, we can't stay still," he said.

"A big question is 'does the current council wish to become sustainable and what level do we need to reach to do that'.

"We need to be able to finance our wants and needs and if we can't do that we need to look at other ways."

With the state government's Independent Local Government Review expected to change the way councils operate across NSW, Cr Ewin said he supported calls to explore the option of absorbing parts of neighbouring councils like Cabonne.

"Tough decisions are needed," he said.

"We've got an opportunity to grow and we could look at making boundary changes to our benefit that would make the shire larger.

"We don't want to sit back and wait to be taken."

Cr Ewin said another option for the future could also involve taking the Wellington-Blayney-Cabonne alliance to another level.

"That involves sharing services that all of the councils have in common but if we were to go down that road we'd have to ensure the quality of the services isn't reduced," he said.

"The council needs to be self sufficient and I'm hoping that this election will bring seven people together that can work as a team to ensure that happens."

On the issue of the proposed seven per cent special annual rate increase, Cr Ewin said a rate increase of that magnitude would make Blayney Shire Council "fully sustainable".

But he would not commit to supporting the increase, which is recommended in council's long term financial plan.

"I can't say that is the final answer but it's something we need to look at and we will have to do a lot of talking with the community to see what the view is," he said.

Cr Ewin said while the current council has had its fair share of problems, the building blocks have been put in place for the future.

"The Local Environment Plan will be gazetted, we'll have a Development Control Plan done and the Integrated Planning and Reporting process has been completed also so the building blocks for the future are there," he said.

"The council is also set to employ an Economic Development Officer and that position will really help promote the shire and bridge the gap between council and the community."

Residents will go to the polls to elect a new council next Saturday, September 8.

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## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Ferguson elected mayor

By RYAN YOUNG

Oct. 3, 2012, 10:28 a.m.



NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM: Mayor Scott Ferguson and his deputy Allan Ewin.

THE Blayney Shire has a new mayor today after Scott Ferguson fended off a challenge from new councillor David Kingham to claim the top job at a council meeting last night.

Councillor Ferguson secured the support of councillors Geoff Braddon, Allan Ewin, David Somervaille and Shane Oates to gain the mayoralty while Cr Allan Ewin was voted in as deputy mayor despite a challenge from the man who previously occupied the position, Cr Kevin Radburn.

Cr Ferguson described his elevation to mayor as an absolute honour after serving on Blayney Shire Council for the past 13 years.

"I've been fortunate enough to serve with three mayors - councillors John Davis, the late Ted Wilson and councillor Bruce Kingham," he said.

"They've all had different styles but each had one thing in common, they were committed to growing the prosperity of the shire and my aim is to follow in their footsteps."

Establishing closer ties with residents and ratepayers will be a key objective for Cr

Ferguson.

"My main priority is to work harder to ensure the community has more ownership of the council," he said.

"That's a two way street though, council has to involve the community more but the community has to be prepared to get involved with the council because we can't operate in isolation.

"Most people only interact with council when they do business with us and we need to make sure whenever they interact, they're having a positive experience whether they're complaining about a dog or a development application."

Engaging more with local youth and women will help get the community more involved with the council, Cr Ferguson said.

"I think hosting an annual women's forum would be a good idea because mostly it's women that are running our sporting clubs, village associations and even businesses so they need to be recognised.

"Women are a critical part of our community and given there is no female councillor this term, it's important we reach out.

"A similar idea would be to get the schools on board and hold a youth forum so we can hopefully meet the challenge of connecting with our young people."

Councillor Ferguson said one of the key issues the new council will have to address is a recommendation to increase rates by an extra seven per cent a year for the next decade.

He said draft forecasting shows the council would struggle to remain viable without a series of special rate increases which are well above the state government rate set pegging limit.

"Unless the community has a very strong understanding of why we need another rate variation, I don't think the council of the day will support it.

"If the community doesn't support it we need them to understand the downside of rejecting another special rate variation.

"That will almost certainly have to include cutting some services and not going ahead with planned infrastructure upgrades."

Councillor Ferguson said all councils are pressure because NSW is the only state in

Australia that caps the amount of rates councils can charge.

"When costs go up by five per cent and the rate cap is say three per cent, that creates a problem," he said.

On the controversial issue of upgrading the many shire roads that are in a bad condition, Cr Ferguson said the council needs to push harder for more funds from other levels of government.

"A lot of road infrastructure that council now has responsibility for was put in by previous state and federal governments years ago," he said.

"Little money has been put into them since and this under investment, along with population growth, shows why they're in a such bad shape.

"It's unfair to ask councils or the community to pay to fix these roads that they never paid for in the first place."

Another challenge the council faces is the potential of amalgamation with nearby councils, something Cr Ferguson said he will fight against.

"Orange's previous proposal was to split the shire up into three, with parts going to Orange, Cowra and Bathurst.

"As I understand it, their proposal to the Independent Local Government Review, is the old one dusted off.

"Other councils or their representatives have little understanding of the needs of towns and villages in our shire and local jobs would be lost if amalgamation happened so I'm totally against it," Cr Ferguson said.

The new council is united and as mayor and a self-employed plumber, Cr Ferguson said he would bring a different style to the role.

"Most mayors are retired farmers or high profile businessmen so I'm not your atypical mayor and I hope that I will be different from other mayors," he said.

Cr Ferguson said his challenger for the mayoral role, Cr David Kingham, was well within his rights to contest the position.

"It's a sign of healthy, robust democracy," he said.

Cr Kingham said while he knew he didn't have the numbers to become mayor, he contested the position because he believes competition is healthy.

"I've got some credentials I think could help the council," he said.

Both men said councillors would work together to advance the interests of the entire shire.

"There's no animosity," Cr Kingham said.

"I hope Scott does a good job and that will involve some very serious decision making and leadership.

"There's certainly no two sides on this council like there was on the last one."

Cr Ferguson previously served as mayor for a short time in 2008 after the death of then mayor, Ted Wilson.

Bruce Kingham served as mayor for the past four years but retired at the recent election.



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## Blayney Chronicle [\(/\)](#)

# Council short staffed, owed money: Report

By RYAN YOUNG

Dec. 6, 2012, midnight

BLAYNEY Shire Council operates with a lower number of full time equivalent staff than any of the states other similarly sized councils, a Division of Local Government report comparing the performance of NSW councils shows.

With just 63 full time equivalent staff working at the council in the 2010/11 period, Blayney had the lowest number of full time workers than other councils in its group 10 sized category of categories.

By contrast, alliance partners Wellington had 125 staff over the same period and Cabonne had 172, the comparative information on NSW Local Government Councils 2010/11 report reveals.

The NSW state average of full time workers at councils was 291.

The report also shows an increasing number of residents owe the Blayney council money.

Around 8.9 per cent of rates and annual charges remained outstanding in 2010/11 - up from 7.5 per cent the previous year.

The NSW state average of outstanding rates and charges was 5.3 per cent. Blayney Shire Council general manager Glenn Wilcox said while the level of outstanding rates and charges at Blayney is within acceptable auditing limits, the council is taking additional steps to recoup money owed.

"Council also adjusted its policy on reducing time limits before collection action is taken which will assist overall collection," he said.

On the issue of the declining number of full time staff, Mr Wilcox said full time staff numbers had been reducing consistently through natural attrition.

"This is based on the reduced funding council has received due to rate pegging and

cost shifting from state and federal governments," he said.

"Rate pegging has made NSW Councils very efficient at service delivery, however the councils reach a point where the cost of living and costs of materials recede the ability for councils to meet long term commitments."

n MORE ON THIS REPORT INTO COUNCILS

- Next Week

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## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Council ponders rate rises

By Margaret Paton

April 11, 2013, midnight

Blayney Shire residents should steel themselves for a hefty rate rise from 2013-14 going by the contents of the 1.44kg of integrated planning and reporting documents council endorsed at its Monday night meeting.

Later this month councillors will flesh out more detail at a workshop and hopefully decide on one of two rate rise options.

The maintained services model under consideration would see 3.324% rate rise in 2013-14, then a 15% special variation each year for six years from the next year plus a perpetual 3.3% annual increase from 2021-21.

The other option - for reduced services - would increase rates by 3.324% in 2013-14 then 3.3% each year forever.

The council report said this model would see council's services and infrastructure decline and was "not sustainable in the long term".

Before council could levy a rate rise, it needs to consult extensively with ratepayers and residents, then report on that feedback to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Authority which would approve or knock back the rise.

At the meeting Councillor Kevin Radburn said of the plans council approved: "This is only the starting point and we have a lot of work to do in the next six to 12 months."

Councillor David Kingham echoed that saying ratepayers should "not get the idea that everything in [the council business paper] will happen".

However, Councillor Geoff Braddon OAM cautioned council against planning for rate rises when council "does not know where it will stand" or exist following the recommendations due this year from Local Government Review Panel.

Clr Radburn countered that by saying "it's business as usual as far as I am concerned".

### Napier Oval toilets

At the council meeting, Mayor Scott Ferguson said the Napier Oval toilets "had to be condemned" and council would need to "move reasonably quickly" to ensure a replacement block was added to the works list as part of council's forward planning.

### Cash and investment position

Council also reported a slight decrease in its total investment and cash position to \$9,589,154 as at 26 March. Its investments earned just over \$35,000 interest last month.

Council continues to be involved in legal action to minimise its losses of its Collateralised Debt Obligations, Kakadu, which was worth \$169,413 at the end of February. The council report said it was "anticipated as the investment draws near to maturity, the market value will increase".

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## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Council soldiers on: 15% rate rise

By Margaret Paton

May 16, 2013, midnight

A 15% rate rise for Blayney shire residents for six years from 2014-15 is looking more likely after Blayney Shire Council approved the rise as part of its package of financial, operational and planning documents.

Council still needs approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Authority for special variation rate rise and must consult with Blayney shire residents then report their feedback to the authority. Rates will increase 3.24% in 2013-14.

Cr Geoff Braddon moved the motion to approve the rate rises as part of a swag of integrated planning and reporting documents and Cr Allan Ewin seconded it.

At the meeting, Cr David Kingham asked council why eight, 10 or 12% rate rises weren't on the table after being discussed at a recent councillor workshop.

"I totally reject [a] 15% [rate rise]," he said.

"Fifteen per cent is unsustainable to ratepayers. It implies there will never be grants for bridgework."

Mayor Scott Ferguson said: "[15%] is the exact number we need over 10 years to be on top of our ageing infrastructure and support our services."

General manager Glenn Wilcox said as council became more efficient it "may be able to say 15% is not acceptable for the future years, it may be 8% or 5%.

"If you got approval for 8% you can't go up, but there's nothing stopping council from adopting a lower figure if we do get the higher rate rise approval," he said.

"Members of the community will struggle to pay 15%, but we want to come up with a formula that works."

Mayor Ferguson said council had received three submissions objecting to the rate rise citing hardship concerns.

After the meeting, Mr Willcox said council would go to village committees and appoint a facilitator to run focus groups to canvass community views on the potential rate rise. The process is expected to take about six months.

Council also approved a \$876,000 loan to fix three bridges on Barry Road, Old Lachlan Road and Carcoar Dam Road, but council may reconsider how much it needs to borrow.

Mr Willcox said: "Council needs to continue to look at cost savings in its bridge replacement program, but if we [approve the borrowing] we won't need to go back to council if the amount is lower."

For more detail about council's financial and operational strategies and plans, visit [www.blayney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au).

n Read Mayor Scott Ferguson's column about the documents on page 3.



# Under 30 and the boss

By Margaret Paton

Not your average teenager: at 15 he finished Year 10, left school, bought a house, started a carpentry and joinery apprenticeship, renovated the house in his spare time and then sold it five months later.

This kid was destined for big things - fast forward to now.

Peter O'Brien, 29, owns his self-named - and award winning construction business employing eight people with an office in Blayney's main street. The business specialises in high end housing as well as medium sized commercial projects up to \$5m within three hours' drive of Blayney.

Reflecting on half his lifetime ago, Mr O'Brien said: "None of the local builders were looking for a permanent apprentice, so I was very fortunate that I was able to rotate between local builders and obtain different builders' skills and expertise."

But he was "no angel" at St Joseph's Catholic high school student.

"I'm a big believer in the small class sizes as I definitely think they make a difference in people's education. We had some really good teachers who helped pull me into line and persevered with me at times," said Mr O'Brien.

By age 20, he had his full builder's licence then went out on his own doing small jobs and concrete work building up his business from there.

The most iconic project he's worked on, he said, was the Gracelands Hotel Motel at Parkes where the Elvis Festival originated - his business converted a commercial building into a 22-room hotel/motel in just nine weeks.

Highlights and low lights of running his own business?

"Flexibility and being able to do with you love every day. It's tough at times - there's sometimes pressures as well as the constant unforeseen. Every business has its peaks and troughs."

He's also kickstarted O'Brien Wash and Go - car and



Peter O'Brien, of Peter O'Brien Constructions in his Adelaide Street, Blayney office

dog wash - and soon a storage shed project for boats and caravans.

His construction business won a 2011 Master Builders' Association award for design and construction of a house up to \$500K (Orange). He defers to his project manager Lee Mulvey for giving that project the edge.

Mr O'Brien's biggest mistake? "Presuming that everyone pays on time and not managing properly. It was the hardest thing to keep on top of and probably still is to date," said Mr O'Brien.

In five years' time, he hopes to be happily married to his fiancée with kids, doing construction projects up to \$20m, have his other businesses thrive with solid investments and diversify into a few other areas.

Advice to other under 30-year-olds thinking of starting a business?

"It's not for everyone as it's a lot easier to get a job on a good income, but if you are looking to work for yourself you need to be very determined as you will have a fair few setbacks."

"You need to stay focused and be ever ready for the many challenges it will present," he said.



## Mayoral Comment

with Councillor Scott Ferguson

On Monday, councillors adopted the 2013-14 Integrated Planning Report including the community strategic plan, engagement strategy, delivery program, operational plan and resourcing strategy. They direct council's next four years and forecast 10 years of sustainability.

Rates will increase by 3.3% in the next financial year. Thereafter operational costs increase

and we need more money to deliver services and improve ageing community infrastructure.

State and Federal governments are cutting funds to local government and with sharply increasing business costs, councillors must consider increasing rates in the near future. We have spent much time looking at options.

Rate rises need community understanding

and support - it's our roles to seek your input, particularly over the next six months.

The recent local government review panel report recommended we merge with Orange and Cabonne within seven years - 'disappear' into Orange is a better word. Orange council has said they would not spend an extra cent.

If amalgamated, our shire would lose staff, representation, self determination and not see any real improvements. We should shape and control our own direction and future.

## Blayney Shire Council News

### Coffers continue to contract

Council's investment and cash position continued to decrease for the second quarter in a row to \$8,847,854 to the end of April. This includes \$32,984 in interest earned in April. Council earned an average of 4.24% on \$800,000 of its investments plus \$4.45% on \$0.5M it has in a collateralised debt obligation with ANZ as the custodian.

### Blayney flood plan funded

Council resolved on Monday night to fund a \$100,000-plus tender for a town of Blayney flood study and floodplain risk management study and plan. Consultants Sinclair Knight Mertz will undertake the study to look at the historical and current flood conditions of the Blayney catchment which is about 140 square kilometres.

SKM's report will recommend appropriate planning setbacks and flood planning levels.

Council will fund the 20% of the project over two financial years with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage the rest.

At the meeting Cllr David Kingham asked council that the consultant look at recommending removing willow trees in the Belubula River.

"It is my belief that when you replace a \$1m bridge there has to be 100m or 150m either side of the bridge cleared of trees."

"This flood plan study will be null and void if the river isn't straightened out and willows removed in particular places," he said.

Council's general manager Glenn Wilcox said he would "take those comments on board".

### Liquid waste monitoring

A council-appointed consultant will next month start checking Blayney and Millthorpe's businesses for where their liquid waste goes. The Liquid Waste Monitoring Program will report back to council on its findings about two months after that and recommend "deficiencies in the discharge of this waste stream", said the report to council's Monday night meeting.

Restaurants without a grease trap could discharge too much fat into the sewer blocking pumps, for example.

"Inappropriate liquid trade waste to sewer can destroy the treatment process at the sewerage treatment plant requiring

emergency actions to re-establish the treatment process," the report said.

### New funds for roads and bridges

Council's draft local infrastructure plan is going back out on public exhibition for another four weeks because it found a "loophole" to source extra funds from developers for road rehabilitation and bridge replacement. Under section 94 developer contributions, council can secure an extra \$2300 per lot for roads and bridges, according to planning and environmental services director Leon Rodwell.

### NBN towers approved

Two towers for the National Broadband Network were approved for Neville and Carcoar. The Neville tower will be 1.3km from town despite council's report raising concerns about public safety on the road and recommending a traffic management plan be approved first for the site.

Meanwhile, another tower will go on the water reservoir at 37 Rodd Street, Carcoar despite opposition. Mayor Scott Ferguson said while those concerns were heard, the wishes of Blayney shire residents to have upgraded broadband services outweighed the heritage value issues of the water tower.

### Tardy ratepayers may lose land

Blayney Shire Council has begun the process to sell land on which more than five years of rates are owing. At council's Monday night meeting, it heard there are 11 properties owing a total of more than \$88,000. The plan is to contact owners first and if the sale goes ahead, council would also charge for sale expenses.

### Napier Oval loo on the agenda

A plan for installing temporary toilets at Blayney's Napier Oval will be up for approval at council's June meeting. Cllr David Kingham asked infrastructure services director Grant Baker to look into the move after pressure from the newly formed Blayney Shire sports council. Toilets at the oval had become a public hazard and were pulled down despite it being the home training ground for Blayney soccer clubs.

■ Next week: The Blayney Chronicle looks at the village plans approved at Monday night's meeting plus 'unpacks' council's quarterly financial performance.

## Millthorpe Murmurs

Laurie and Linda Williams

### Millthorpe Tennis Club ready for night games

Four 1,000-watt light poles are now in place and ready to light evening tennis at Millthorpe's tennis courts at Redmond Oval. Erected by L-Don Sporting Areas of Orange and costing more than \$25,000, the four poles were finally put in place last Wednesday after delays in getting the light fittings at the tops of the poles. The State Government Community Building Partnership Program gave \$15,000 and council and Cadia Valley Operations \$5000. Millthorpe Public School P&C and the Millthorpe Garden Ramble Committee also chipped in \$1,000 each.

The lightning will be a boon for the recently formed Millthorpe Tennis Club that manages the courts - allowing for mid autumn to mid spring evening games and practice at the courts.

Club membership fees is \$75 adult, \$50 junior and \$150 family, including the children. Members use the courts during the year at no charge and are given a key. However, there will be an additional charge if you want lighting to cover electricity.

For more info, call club secretary, Jeanne Truloff, on 6366-3683 or treasurer Alvaro Marques, on 6366-3156.

### Millthorpe's Biggest Morning Tea

Millthorpe CWA will hold Millthorpe's Biggest Morning Tea on Thursday 23 May in their CWA Rooms in Pym Street Millthorpe between 10am and noon. Come along for a tasty morning tea to raise funds for the Cancer Council.

### Got something for the Murmurs?

Contact us at mm@goannagraphics.com or drop a note in at Galvanised, 17 Pym Street, Millthorpe.



Jamie Bevan (left) from Orange and electrical contractor Peter Garvey from Blayney complete work on the final light pole at Millthorpe's tennis courts. A completed pole can be seen in the background.



## Laneway to fame

Blayney shire locals Clancy Lane and Jordan Lane (pictured above in costume) said it's been "awesome" being on stage for the Orange Theatre Company's production of the Wizard of Oz.

Tickets are still available for this polished, high energy bursting-with-talent show for tonight's, tomorrow's and Saturday's performance.

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☒ News ☐ Business**Central  
Western Daily** (1)

# Amalgamation: Rate increase key to Blayney flying solo

By CLARE COLLEY

June 7, 2013, 4 a.m.



Blayney Shire Council general manager Glenn Wilcox.

BLAYNEY Shire Council will be safe until at least 2020 under the conditions of the local government review, but in the meantime the council will attempt to shore up its future with rate increases, according to general manager Glenn Wilcox.

Mr Wilcox (pictured) said the council had not objected to the suggested merger in its submission to the review panel, but asked for time to allow a transition for the community if the amalgamation did go ahead.

The council has advertised plans for a special rate increase of 15 per cent starting from 2014/15, but still needs approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) before they ask for feedback from the public.





(<http://www.centralwesterndaily.com.au/story/1554779/the-great-amalgamation-debate/interactive/>)

“If they want Blayney to merge with Orange they could refuse the rate variation and make it difficult,” Mr Wilcox said.

“If they want us to survive to 2020 Blayney needs a rate increase and we will slowly catch up.

“If we merged tomorrow residents in Orange would have to pay for upgrades in Blayney.”

Mr Wilcox said if the rate hike was approved the council would be “ticking along nicely” within seven years.

Blayney residents feared they would lose local representation, have to travel further to visit the council and would see the quality of services suffer if they were merged with Orange, Mr Wilcox said.

Over time residents would also notice a big difference in staffing levels if a merger went ahead.

The council has urged the panel to continue shared services through a county council set-up instead of mergers.

But if the panel does decide to go ahead with mergers and boundary changes, Mr Wilcox said the council would ask to take over parts of the old Evans Shire, now part of Bathurst Regional Council, the Cowra Shire and Cabonne that borders the Blayney Shire.



# Blayney Chronicle

Incorporating the LYNDHURST SHIRE CHRONICLE

Thursday, September 12, 2013

PRICE \$1.50 (incl GST)

THIS WEEK



**MP  
Cobb  
re-elected  
Page 5**



**Carcoar  
Dinner  
Dance  
Page 9**



**Award  
nominee  
Lisa  
Page 15**

## Rate rise impact "horrendous", says councillor

By Margaret Paton

Blayney Shire Council did not need to ask a university academic about the community impact of a proposed 15% rate rise for six years from next financial year, said councillor David Kingham as it would be "horrendous".

Cr Kingham was talking at Monday night's council meeting where a report about the special rate variation was discussed.

It detailed the process council will take before it can gain approval from the Independent Regulatory and Pricing Tribunal (IPART) to impose the rate rise on ratepayers.

Cr Kingham said: "Why do we need Charles Sturt University academics to tell us what the implications are?"

"I have quickly worked it out ... it's more than a 100 per cent increase over six years.

"Whatever you come up with, the implications for me and people I speak to are horrendous and I will not be voting for the rate increase."

Mayor Scott Ferguson said council would engage the Western Research

Institute under the IPART request to look into the affordability of the rate rise that "may or may not affect the community".

"It's part of our due diligence," he said.

General manager Glenn Wilcox said a consultant would be appointed in about a fortnight.

"We will start to run out newsletters about what the special rate variation is, why it's at 15% and the indication to the community why council has made this decision based on its asset renewal and budgets."

Council will then consider the consultant's report and if council decided that people would not be able to afford the rise, said Mr Wilcox, then "council needs to determine what the per cent will be".

"We have made the best call we can and as we've seen tonight and with the staff, we all respect 15% is a big increase," he said.

The next step would be for council to go out to each village and talk with village committees about the rise, said Mr Wilcox.

## Mayor and deputy re-elected

Blayney Shire councillors Scott Ferguson and Alan Ewin were re-elected mayor and deputy mayor respectively at Monday night's council meeting.

There were no other nominations for the positions, said council's general manager Glenn Wilcox.

Mayor Ferguson said: "It's always a difficult year the first year of a [new] council.

"I'm looking forward to working with my fellow councillors and council staff ... with the many challenges they and the community face."



From left James Ford and wife Dr Tamara Ford who said they have hit a brick wall with negotiations with Blayney Shire Council about continuing her GP practice.  
INSET: From left practice manager Erin Johns with Dr Tamara Ford in her home surgery at the Five Frogs Guest House

## Carcoar GP in limbo

By Margaret Paton

Carcoar GP Dr Tamara Ford said she is so "frustrated by the run around" she's had with Blayney Shire Council over the past three months over her development application to move her clinic that she may "pull up stumps".

Last Friday Dr Ford closed her practice in the old hospital grounds near Uralba due to safety issues.

"My staff were getting injured. It was unsafe. We had to close," she told the Blayney Chronicle.

She is operating from her home, the Five Frogs Guesthouse, which her husband, James, also runs a cafe/restaurant.

"I'm doing the best I can providing a medical service to my patients," said Dr Ford.

The crux of the issue is the guesthouse premises must tick off level 5 requirements of the Australian

Building Code whereas the cafe only needs level 3, she said.

"It's impractical and unnecessary for the clinic to be level 5.

"Council has asked me to fire isolate the business from the cafe with a fire wall, but it can't touch the ceiling because it's a heritage building," she said of a meeting last Friday with council's representatives at her site.

"That was the first time anyone gave us clear guidance. I'm exhausted trying to figure it out.

"It's beyond me - we don't have a high traffic load through the cafe or clinic."

Dr Ford has asked council for an interim permit to operate as a GP clinic while her application for permanent approval is being processed.

■ continued on page 11

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26 SELWYN STREET, BARRY

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Large Residential block (approx. 2023m<sup>2</sup>) zoned R5 Lot Residential, only 10 minutes from Blayney. Power available to the block. Rural outlook. Won't last long at this price!

\$50,000

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☒ News ☐ Business

## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Council to 'get ahead' with rate rise survey

By Margaret Paton

Sept. 19, 2013, midnight

Blayney Shire Council has unveiled its survey to find out what the community wants for the "future delivery of council's services", as part of council's pitch for a rate rise of 15% starting next financial year for six years.

This week the survey went online, through council's new website - which went live yesterday. The survey can be completed via a letter box dropped hard copy.

The survey is simply written and asks people to rank as not, somewhat or very important 34 services or attributes including 'attractiveness' of 'town and village appearance', but does not allow space for other comments.

Also, residents completing the survey may not realise it is part of the community consultation for the rate rise as it does not mention those words or the percentage directly.

As well, a council media release about the survey issued on Tuesday leaves it until the fourth paragraph to state the "proposed 15% special rate variation" but does not indicate council's wish that that rise be in place for six years straight.

For the rest of the story, see our hard copy issue.

☒ News ☐ Business[Blayney Chronicle \(/\)](#)

## POLL: What do you think about the proposed rate rise?

Sept. 24, 2013, 11:06 a.m.



Council has proposed a 15 per cent rate rise for six years starting next financial year to maintain and build assets and services for the community - what do you think of the rise?

The Blayney Chronicle understands this proposed rate rise will be compounded so that while it is 15 per cent for the first year, each year afterwards it will be 15 per cent more than the previous year's rate. That means it is not 15 per cent of the base rate we currently have this year.

**Council has proposed a 15 per cent rate rise for six years, starting next financial year, to maintain and build assets and services for the community. Do you support the rate rise?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**If you don't support that rise, what would be rate you would support?**

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ 5%
- ☐ 10%
- ☐ I support 15%
- ☐ other

Other (please specify)

**What impact will the rate rise - as proposed - have on you and your family?**

**Have you completed council's survey for the rate rise?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Will you contact council with your views?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



Disclaimer: These polls are not scientific and reflect the opinion only of visitors who have chosen to participate



☒ News ☐ Business

## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Council seeks third rate-rise option

By Margaret Paton

Oct. 10, 2013, midnight

A third rate-rise option - between 3.1% and 15% per year for six years cumulative - is on the agenda for Blayney Shire Council to approve at its meeting on Monday night.

Council's general manager Glenn Wilcox said council needed a "mid point" rate rise option.

The figure is expected to come from the results of the Western Research Institute study into whether the rises were affordable for ratepayers. That report will go public next week, he said.

For the rest of the story, see our hard copy issue.





From left Youth Connections' Scott Hanrahan, Josh Kemp, 15, Lachlan Jones, 15, and Cadia Valley Operations' Ben Hopkins. Photo: Margaret Paton

## Youth BBQ a hit

About 35 young people attended the free BBQ run by Youth Connections at Carrington Park, Blayney, last Friday afternoon.

They gobbled about 100 sausage sandwiches and played a range of activities including soccer, said one of the organisers Amanda Dickie.

Health One offered free lung capacity tests with an on-site machine, and Blayney Rotary provided the barbecue.

Ms Dickie said: "I was a great success."

Attendee, Josh Kemp, 15, said of the event: "It was pretty good, fun interactions, a good time out and a good sausage sizzle."

One of the helpers, Cadia Valley Operations employee Ben Hopkins, brought soccer gear for a friendly game attendees played.

He's been helpful in encouraging young people to stay in education as he's explained that it takes dedication and brings benefits, said Ms Dickie.

Mr Hopkins was apprentice of the year in the past.

Youth Connections runs an outreach service in Blayney every Friday for young people at risk of leaving or who have already left education. Youth Connections employs worker Scott Hanrahan to run the service.

The next barbecue will be on Friday, 1 November from 1.30pm to 3pm at the same venue.

## Gold Mine OPEN DAY & Blayney Festival

Sunday 17 November 2013



The Cadia Valley Operations Open Day is an

opportunity for visitors to experience firsthand the surface mining operations of one of Australia's largest underground gold mines.

On the 2.5 hour guided bus tours visitors will:

- See sweeping views of the open cut lookout
- Get up close to super-sized mining machinery
- Visit CVO's ore processing plant
- Glimpse into the future at the progressive rehabilitation of CVO's waste rock dumps



This year, the Open Day will be run exclusively out of Blayney and will be held in conjunction with the inaugural Blayney Festival.

Buses will depart every 10 minutes from CentrePoint Sport and Leisure on Ogilvy Street, Blayney, with the first bus leaving at 8.30am.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Visitors MUST wear long trousers, enclosed shoes and a sleeved shirt.
- All visitors must abide by a ZERO alcohol & drug limit.

Tickets must be presented for entry on the buses and are available:

- Online at: [www.cadiavalley.com.au/openday](http://www.cadiavalley.com.au/openday)
- Blayney Visitor Information Centre, Ph: 6368 3534
- Orange Visitor Information Centre, Ph: 1800 089 466

[www.cadiavalley.com.au/openday](http://www.cadiavalley.com.au/openday)

Blayney Festival will showcase the local goods and produce, tourist attractions and talents of the Blayney community and will include:

- Market stalls
- A 'touch of gold' art competition for all ages
- Art workshops and a community corner to learn new skills
- Acoustic music at Carrington Park
- All day free entry into CentrePoint Sport and Leisure's facilities, including the pool and gym.

Tickets are a gold coin donation with all proceeds going towards the Blayney community bus

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By Margaret Paton

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Council's general manager Glenn Wilcox said council needed a "mid point" rate rise option.

The figure is expected to come from the results of the Western Research Institute study into whether the rises were affordable for ratepayers. That report will

go public next week, he said.

Council expects to upload to its website soon an interactive table allowing ratepayers to key in their current rates and see how they will increase with the options.

Mr Wilcox said: "Keep in mind a 15% increase isn't 15% of your total value of rates - it's just the general rates - not those for garbage and sewer for example."

From next Tuesday council will roll out its village meetings schedule to discuss the rate rise options

with locals.

"If you can't get to your village's or town's meeting, come to one you can."

Council's online and paper survey to find out what service levels residents wanted closes tomorrow.

For those who won't be able to make that deadline, there will be another survey with rate-rise proposal figures distributed at the village meetings.

Visit [www.blayney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au) for the dates and venues of the meetings.

## Carcoar bridge to open tomorrow



Naylor Street bridge, Carcoar, with its new wooden planks installed - it opened (unofficially) last week to traffic.

Naylor Street bridge in Carcoar will be officially opened by the State Member for Bathurst, Paul Toole, tomorrow.

Blayney Shire Council encouraged locals to attend the ceremony from 10.30am to 10.45, then join a small celebration and sausage sizzle in Kurt Fearnley Park nearby afterwards.

A spokesperson for council said: "It will be part of an important moment in the history of the Carcoar community."

"The restored bridge is indeed a magnificent example of craftsmanship and skill."

Wooden planks have replaced the concrete deck which was laid in the late 1990s.

Blayney Shire Council matched funding from the NSW Government to remove the concrete and restore the hardwood deck, similar to the original 1856 construction.

## AUCTION

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- Extremely long frontage to Carcoar Dam
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- First time offered in 59 years

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## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Council's update on rate rise pitch

Oct. 18, 2013, midnight

## SPECIAL RATE VARIATION – ADVICE TO THE SHIRE COMMUNITY

### Mayoral Introduction

Over the last 18 months Blayney Shire Councillors and the staff have been undertaking a detailed review of the future direction of Council and the level of services required, to ensure that the Shire roads, bridges, buildings, parks and ovals and community service levels are maintained at a high level. Council's review has recently been confirmed by the community survey that was undertaken where the respondents identified that roads, bridges, and recreational facilities are a high priority to this community.

Council has undertaken a detailed review of its assets and has inspected the closed bridges, the roads, footpaths and buildings to identify unfunded maintenance works. This review is part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements of the NSW Government and has required Councillors to take a detailed look at the organisation and to ensure that it is heading in the direction that you, as residents, identified in the development of the IP&R (community direction) documents .

After all, Councillors are elected to ensure that the residents receive a reasonable standard of service for their rates and charges and that the community has assets that provide for future generations (intergenerational equity).

The work undertaken in the review of the assets, budgets and the IP&R documents has highlighted that Council due to rate pegging over the last 30 years has fallen behind in what it can afford. Without a Special Rate Variation (SRV) we will continue to fall further behind and our roads, bridges and other service areas will continue to deteriorate and become unusable.

The Council is therefore talking to you about introducing a Special Rate Variation (SRV) and requires your advice as to the acceptable level you believe the community can afford and the expected level of service you require Council to meet into the future. The SRV's are discussed in this document and why Council has undertaken an independent review of the affordability across each rating sector.

This is our Shire and we need your help to Keep Up, Get Ahead and Back Ourselves.

What is a Special rate Variation (SRV) and why do we need it?

A Special Rate Variation is a change to the general rate payable above the yearly increase that is available from IPART and the NSW State Government. In previous years Council has adopted rate increases from 2.5% to 3.5% based on this allowable increase.

As the community is aware, Council in 2008/09 introduced a SRV for the replacement of the community centre and this variation at the time was 8.19% or roughly \$75.00 per rate assessment at its introduction. As a community this was not well received although the building and its use by the community is going well.

Under the rules that govern how Council operates, it is required to go to the community and seek advice on a ten year program that acknowledged what the community wanted and provide advice to the community on the delivery of those items, review the conditions of its assets (roads, bridges, footpaths, buildings etc.), to determine its workforce to undertake what the community requires and to produce a budget that could fund the works and services for ten years.

Councillors and staff have been fine tuning these items to determine if it can provide improvements in assets and services under the current funding, or if it requires a SRV. Council has determined based on its reviews and the recently completed survey that a SRV is required.

How much is the SRV?

Council has discussed and determined that it would present to the community the basis of a SRV and to allow the community to give feedback on the level of service that they believe is acceptable.

Council has also undertaken an independent review of the SRV to determine if the community can afford the SRVs proposed and to identify groups that may be disadvantaged by such an increase. Councillors have also considered that the SRV for the community centre should be removed if the community supports a 15% special rate variation.

Based on the IP&R process and the independent review undertaken by the Western Research Institute at Bathurst, the following permanent SRV options are proposed for you to consider:

1. Reduced Services Model - 3.3% being the proposed rate cap each year (current situation) for all rating categories.
2. Maintained Model - Residential/business/mining and farmland 10.0% per annum over 4 years (cumulative)
3. Road to Infrastructure Improvement Model -15% per annum over 6 years (cumulative) for all rating categories

What will the SRV cost me?

For the tables - <http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/Planning-For-Our-Future/Special-Rate-Variation/Community-Consultation/Village-Consultation-Program> (<http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/Planning-For-Our-Future/Special-Rate-Variation/Community-Consultation/Village-Consultation-Program>)

The Average Rate increases proposed for the rate categories of Business and Mining are available on Council's web site.

What will we see for the SRV's proposed?

Like you, Councillors are concerned that any increase in rates funding should be used to improve the Shires' assets, ensure that roads and bridges remain open and that our level of service can be maintained and improved over time.

The current level of funding through our rates is falling behind the real world cost of living and Councils are required like any home owner or tenant to pay for increases in the costs of living for electricity, gas, water and fuel. We have seen electricity rise by 18% in 2012/13 and gas rise by 8.5% across NSW and water rise by 8%. Council also has increases in wages, superannuation and insurance costs, the same as any other business. Councils do not receive any discounts to market prices.

The proposed options are all permanent rate increases and cumulative each year.

Option 1 Reduced Services Model - 3.3% being the proposed rate cap each year (current situation) for all rating categories.

This option proposed is the rate capping proposal of 3.3% (estimate) which is the status quo. This situation is unsustainable as it does not increase the funding required to maintain Council at its current level and it will not allow Council to fund any future works or upgrades to roads, bridges etc. which have been identified as being a priority in the community survey. The level of funding will eventually require Council to reduce its staff numbers and this means that roads will not be maintained, that parks and gardens will receive less maintenance and Councillors will need to make decisions less favourable to its ratepayers.

Option 2 Maintained Model -Residential/business/mining and Farmland 10.0% over 4 years (cumulative)

In the Western Research Institute (WRI) Review of affordability into Blayney Shire, WRI identified:

that the community could afford a 15% rates increase,

that the increase based on the level of rates being paid is less than adjoining Councils and similar sized Councils across NSW

that based in real terms that the rural community that does not have off farm income or relies extensively on rural activity for its income will find it more difficult to meet the proposed 15% increase annually,

that the rural rate payers are currently paying high rates compared to our adjoining Councils and Councils of similar size in NSW, and

that some government support recipients will also find it harder to pay for a rates increase annually.

Council is therefore proposing a mid-point in the SRV that is to consider a 10.0% variation to the residential, business, mining and non-farm rates and to rural rates (farmland rating category) for a four year period.

Under this SRV, the community will receive a lower level of service and Council will need to fine tune its budgets, its works programs and to look at alternatives to the replacement of bridges, roads and other assets that are suitable to community needs. This level of service will see improvements made but it will require the

community to expect some delays in service as staff levels will be maintained but increased for required works only and that no capital (new developments) will occur until roads, bridges, footpaths and buildings are slowly brought up to a higher standard.

Option 3 Road to Infrastructure Improvement Model – 15% each year over 6 years (cumulative) for all rating categories

Council has identified that under a SRV of 15% for all rate payers that it will have funding to be able to improve its overall works programs and to raise loans that will be paid back over 10 to 30 years for major items such as bridge replacements. This level of funding is cumulative so each year the rates will increase by 15% on top of the year before. This will allow Council to provide a higher level of service quicker and after the 6 years SRV period it will be able to review capital improvements and funding.

The following chart indicates from Council's Long Term Financial Plan the income versus the expenditure required to bring council's services to a Maintained Services level.

Can we afford to downgrade Assets?

The current situation across Blayney Shire is that we have 3 bridges closed due to funding short falls. This is not a good position to be in as it does restrict the movement of people and emergency services on our roads. Blayney Shire has approximately 20 bridges that need major maintenance to ensure they can remain open to the public. We would also like to ensure that village roads, footpaths and structures are maintained to a higher level to attract tourists and to make them pleasing to live within.

In the past we have seen that buildings such as the Community Centre, that required demolition rather than repair and CentrePoint which requires a large amount of maintenance. The rebuilding of the Community Centre by our local trades people and businesses was a wonderful example of a community pulling together to provide a community facility of a very high standard.

For more info, go to the source document:

<http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/Planning-For-Our-Future/Special-Rate-Variation/Community-Consultation/Village-Consultation-Program>  
(<http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/Planning-For-Our-Future/Special-Rate-Variation/Community-Consultation/Village-Consultation-Program>)

## TOTAL INCOME INCLUDING RATE INCREASES V TOTAL EXPENDITURE COUNCIL SERVICES (EXCL. SEWER FUND)

Total income including 3.3% peg

Additional Income from 4 year 10% p.a.variation

Additional Income from 6 year 15% p.a.variation

Total expenditure including cap ex and borrowings

The community has an expectation that the elected Councillors and the staff will ensure that these assets are maintained to a reasonable standard and that improvements are made to reduce long term deterioration. That is our goal. A SRV is required to ensure that we do not down grade assets and that road, bridges and buildings will be available to future generations.

### Other Income

Blayney Shire receives income from other sources of funding other than rates, but this historically only makes up 49% of all income available to Council. Over the years, the sources of state and federal government grants has reduced and this trend is expected to continue.

During the recent Federal election campaign, statements were made that bridge funding will be provided, the RDA grant funding will be reallocated etc. Council cannot crystal ball what is going to happen with funding, but has included known funding in its financial predictions such as Federal Assistance grants and Roads to Recovery funding. Even these long term funding streams may be removed by government which will cause extreme stress on all Councils across Australia.

Council is positive that the Commonwealth Government will maintain funding and that additional funding becomes available. Council is also working hard with its State member to find funding for village enhancement plans and to help in bridge repairs and capital upgrades.

If future funding becomes available especially in the area of timber bridge repairs and replacement, then this will have a large impact on what Council can undertake. It will also allow Council to review the level of SRV that the community may be required to pay in future years. The SRV is to bring assets up to a higher standard and ensure that bridges, roads, parks and buildings do not deteriorate further. If funding is

available from grants or other sources then the Councillors can decide to reduce the SRV. Councillors are hopeful that promises made by our elected Federal Government are honoured.

### Review into Local Government and Amalgamation

As the community is aware, a review is being undertaken into local government in NSW and the final report is about to go to the Government. The review has been undertaken as the NSW Government and its Treasury office has identified that NSW Councils are unsustainable unless changes are made. Blayney Shire is in an acceptable position at this point in time but its future is of a declining budget, unsustainable asset maintenance, and things will get tougher.

Many Councils, including some in our region are in a far worse position than Blayney Shire.

This review has initially suggested that Blayney Shire can operate efficiently but if nothing changes to its finances, then it should consider merging with Orange City Council and Cabonne Shire. This suggestion does not mean that Orange City residents will fund improvements to roads, bridges, parks and garden etc. In fact Orange City Council has stated that this will not occur.

What this may require is for all rates to rise to meet the costs of providing services across a bigger area. Orange City Council residents could not be expected to fund Blayney Shire and Cabonne residents, as Blayney residents could not be expected to fund any other adjoining Council area.

Is an amalgamated Council that is un-financial and unsustainable going to be better than what we currently have? For more information on this you need to read the NSW Tcorp reports into the sustainability of NSW local government.

### Rebates for Government Pension Recipients

As part of the WRI review they noted that some government support recipients may find it difficult to meet the SRV increase of 15% as proposed. For this reason, depending on the community's advice on the SRV, Councillors will make a determination if additional funding offsets are required into the future that will support this group of people and their families. Council has not set a level for this funding but it will be considered in the budget reviews.

How do I have my say as to the SRV I want?

Firstly, as Councillors elected to provide service to the Blayney community we will listen and we will respect your advice. We will take into account all people that live in the Shire and not restrict our decision to a minority or to those that are the most vocal. The IP&R process was developed to ensure that our residents have an opportunity to participate in the big decisions and to be honest, this is a big one and it will impact on you and what you will see Council do for many years.

You are asked to fill in the attached survey and place it in the survey box at the meetings or to return it to your local store in the village or return it to Council's office in Blayney. Council will publically advise the community of its decision and the results of the survey.

Thank you for taking time to assist Council to meet our community needs for future generations of residents.

Councillor Scott Ferguson (Mayor)





**Cutting the ribbon to officially open Millthorpe's tennis courts were, from left, Alex Hausfeld representing Cadia Valley Operations, Tennis Club President Bec Anderson, Paul Toole MP, Blayney Shire Council Mayor Scott Ferguson, and Garden Ramble President John Ash.**



### Millthorpe Tennis Courts and Club launched

After years in preparation, the Millthorpe Tennis Courts and Club was launched during a social tennis day at the courts last Sunday. Shortly after 1pm, state member for Bathurst, Paul Toole MP, cut a ribbon strung between the net posts and declared the Courts and the Club officially open for business.

Many have taken part in the construction of the Redmond Oval courts and night lighting. Most significant were grants from the State Government Community Building Partnership Program, with \$40,000 for the courts and a further \$15,000 for the lighting.

Blayney Shire Council contributed \$45,000, Cadia Valley Operations \$9,660, Millthorpe Garden Ramble \$5,000 and

Millthorpe Public School P & C \$1,000. Fundraising was co-ordinated by the Millthorpe Village Committee, but Randall Edwards, its vice president, was particularly thanked for his efforts.

The Millthorpe Tennis Club will now manage the courts and is keen to enrol local tennis players to use these magnificent facilities.

Annual membership fees are \$75 for adults, \$50 for juniors and \$150 for families. This gives the member an access key and the ability to use the courts at any time during the year at no charge. There's an additional charge of \$10 per use if lighting is required.

Visitors and non-members can use the courts for \$10 per use.

Club contacts are Jeanne Truloff on 6366-3683 or Alvaro Marques on 0419 473 878.

**Anne Newton passes away**  
Anne Newton, who will be well known to many in the village for her voluntary work, sadly passed away in her sleep in the presence of her family on Tuesday last week.

A memorial and thanksgiving

celebration will be held at Norman J Penhall Funerals, 33 William Street, Orange at 11.00 a.m. on Monday 28th October. The Murmurs passes its condolences to her family, husband Brian and children Adrian, Eve, Jonathan and Chloe.

### TrainLink timetable starts this week

A new TrainLink coach timetable began this week including a vastly improved service in the Sydney direction.

**TO SYDNEY:** Mon to Fri: 5.35pm arriving 10.22pm; Sun: 1.35pm arriving 6.31pm

**FROM SYDNEY CENTRAL:** Mon to Fri: 4.20am arr 8.55am and 5.21pm arr 10.08pm; Sat: 5.52pm arr 10.22pm

Catch buses from the Park Street bus stop outside the school and change between bus and train at Lithgow.

### Got something for the Murmurs?

Contact us at [mm@goannagraphics.com](mailto:mm@goannagraphics.com) or drop a note in at Galvanised, 17 Pym Street, Millthorpe.

## Drunk disqualified

A high range unlicensed drink driver was disqualified for 18 months in the local court on October 19.

Matthew Lee Hanrahan, 30, of Martha Street, returned a blood alcohol reading of .205 when he was stopped by police on May 25 at Blayney.

Hanrahan was also placed on a bond to be of good behaviour for 12 months.

According to police Hanrahan, an unlicensed driver, was noticed about 9pm on May 25 this year when nearing the intersection of Church and Adelaide Street at Blayney.

"He came under the notice of police after being stopped for the purposes of a random breath test due to his manner of driving," police said in a statement of facts tendered to the court.

He told police he did not have a licence as it was suspended and that he had drunk three middies of beer between 7.30pm and 9pm that night without food.



## Mayoral Comment

with Councillor Scott Ferguson

Over the past 18 months Blayney Shire Councillors and the staff have been undertaking a detailed review of the future direction of Council and the level of services required, to ensure that the Shire roads, bridges, buildings, parks and ovals and community service levels are maintained at a high level. Council's review has recently been confirmed by the community survey that was undertaken where the respondents identified that roads, bridges, and recreational facilities are a high priority to this community.

Council has undertaken a detailed review of its assets and has inspected the closed bridges, the roads, footpaths and buildings to identify unfunded maintenance works. This review is part of the

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements of the NSW Government and has required Councillors to take a detailed look at the organisation and to ensure that it is heading in the direction that you, as residents, identified in the development of the IP&R (community direction) documents.

After all, Councillors are elected to ensure that the residents receive a reasonable standard of service for their rates and charges and that the community has assets that provide for future generations (intergenerational equity).

The work undertaken in the review of the assets, budgets and the IP&R documents has highlighted that Council due to rate pegging over the last 30

years has fallen behind in what it can afford. Without a Special Rate Variation (SRV) we will continue to fall further behind and our roads, bridges and other service areas will continue to deteriorate and become unusable.

The Council is therefore talking to you about introducing a Special Rate Variation (SRV) and requires your advice as to the acceptable level you believe the community can afford and the expected level of service you require Council to meet into the future. The SRV's are discussed in this document and why Council has undertaken an independent review of the affordability across each rating sector.

This is our Shire and we need your help to Keep Up, Get Ahead and Back Ourselves.



## Carcoar Capers

Carcoar...experience the way we lived with Todd Hahn

### Botanical Bling for Belubula

The new sandstone street pots look great along Belubula Street and our local plant expert was praised at a recent meeting for her decision to avoid a uniform approach and go with a showy selection of shrubs, roses, lolly-pop standards, flowers and trees which is sure to add some bling to our elegant nineteenth century streetscape.

### Carcoar Cup

The Carcoar Cup Running Festival is on 3 of November. According to the 2011 half marathon winner it's the best new meet on the NSW running

calendar. The 60km Ultra Marathon, 30km Half Marathon, 6km Cup for Kids. There will be runners who will be raising money for the Club raising money for the Carcoar and Uralba. For further information on how you can take part in our favourite charity or to register visit [www.carcoarcup.com.au](http://www.carcoarcup.com.au). Email about how you can be an RFS runner, the Carcoar Cup is on call to help out in the next fortnight.

### Landcare Group

The new Carcoar Urban Landcare Group got underway last Friday with a tree planting with Carcoar and Neville primary students helping Blayney Shire Council staff and local volunteers to plant more than 100 native trees and shrubs on the upperside of pound flat.

Council's parks and gardens supervisor Brian Parker gave an informative talk about the benefits of replanting native vegetation and maintaining a natural environment to allow the native fauna to flourish.

The planting was the first stage of a three-year program to create a bird and wildlife corridor and walkway.

Carcoar Urban Landcare president, Eric Foote invites locals to bring a bucket to help water and nurture the new plants.

**Any upcoming events for the Capers**  
Contact us at [ricconlie@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ricconlie@ozemail.com.au)

## Pretend cop gets a bond

A Blayney man who was driving a vehicle containing a flashing light used to stop traffic late at night was placed on a conditional bond to be of good behaviour when negligent driving charges against him were dismissed in the local court on October 15.

Magistrate Allen described the actions of the man, Mark Cowan, as a "silly and juvenile prank".

Cowan, 18 (at the time of the offence), of Morris Street Blayney was charged with the offences in August and September this year.

"I assess you are unlikely to get in trouble again," Mr Allen said.

"The court is not so old that it doesn't understand that young people engage in what can be described as youthful pranks," Mr Allen told Cowan: "our behaviour has consequences".

"As an adult more so than as a child we are responsible and own the consequences of our conduct."

"When you engaged in this conduct I am sure there was more than a slight skip in the heartbeat of the occupants of the other vehicles."

"I do accept that you are clearly remorseful." This conduct, in no small way was centred on your youthfulness and also your desire to fit in.

"If you've got to do this to be a member of the cool group, the cool group is not so cool."

"You've got to follow your own path in life, you do that by engaging your own moral compass," Mr Allen told Cowan.

According to police tendered to the court Cowan, on August 1 this year received a red and blue light similar to that used by police from another person.

About 2am at Orange another person placed the light on the dash of Cowan's vehicle and activated it to stop another car.

On August 31 the light bar was returned to Cowan and again someone in his vehicle activated it whilst following another car.

Later that night police say Cowan was in the vehicle with two other people when it was again used to stop a vehicle.

On Sunday September 1 police received significant information about Cowan and his activities and that he was currently in Orange with the light bar set up inside his vehicle.

Police stopped Cowan's vehicle about 3am on September 2 and when they informed him they would be conducting a search of the vehicle for the light he admitted it was in the car.

### Blayney Shire Council

#### DOCUMENTS ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Following the Council meeting the following are on public exhibition for 28 days:

- Procurement of Goods and Services Policy
- Proposed King George Oval fees – Blayney Little Athletics

#### WOMEN'S FORUM – SHIFTING THE FOCUS

A Women's Forum titled Shifting the Focus will be held at the Blayney Shire Community Centre on Tuesday 5 November 2013 at a cost of \$25.00 per person. Registration details can be found on Council's webpage [www.blayney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au).

#### 2014 AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Members of the Blayney Shire community are invited to nominate persons whom they consider worthy of a 2014 Australia Day Award. There will be five categories which include:

- Citizen of the Year Award
- Young Citizen of the Year Award
- Community Event of the Year Award
- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Appreciation Award

Nominations must be submitted on the prescribed nomination form, which are available from Council's website: [www.blayney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au) or can be collected from Council's Office. Nominations must be received by Council no later than 4.30pm on Friday 29 November 2013.

it's time to **cleanOut**

The Following items CAN NOW BE ACCEPTED at your local waste facilities across the NetWaste region:

- Gas Cylinders
- Fluorescents Lightglobes & Tubes
- Smoke Detectors
- Paint, Garden & Household Chemicals
- Household batteries

**Scheduled collection time at:**

**Blayney - Waste Depot**  
Saturday, 2 November, 2013, 1pm - 4pm

Only household waste will be accepted.  
Contact your local council for details, or visit:

[www.netwaste.org.au](http://www.netwaste.org.au)



### Another stroke book winner

Peter Gibbs (above) of Mandurama is another winner of the Stroke Recovery Carer's Handbook thanks to a competition the Blayney Chronicle has been running this month.

For those who are keen to win a copy of this book, we have one more copy, but you need to be quick to put your entries in by 5pm today.



☒ News ☐ Business

## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Rate rise meeting for rural landholders

Oct. 31, 2013, midnight

Rural ratepayers in Blayney shire have been urged to attend a meeting tonight about Blayney Shire Council's pitch for a rate rise.

Chairman of the NSW Famers' Blayney District Council, Michael Rutherford, has organised the meeting to be held from 7:30pm in the Blayney Shire Community Centre.

Mr Rutherford said the meeting was "entirely about getting a resolution" from attendees about the proposed rate rise.

"It's so that council may get an opinion from farmers - that's why we're targeting mainly rural rate payers."

The meeting will begin with Mayor Scott Ferguson giving an overview, then council's general manager, Glenn Wilcox will give an "abbreviated spiel", said Mr Rutherford.

"Then we will open the meeting to the public to comment.

"It's probably the last chance rate payers are going to get to have their say because council meets on Monday week then take their resolution to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for approval," he said.

Mr Rutherford said two of the options - for either a 10% or 15% cumulative rate rise - would not be good news for rural ratepayers in particular.

"We're getting less for our cattle than we had 10 to 15 years ago; wool prices have been down for a while and lamb prices also. And it's not raining either, he said.

For the 10% rate rise option it "adds up to 53% which is unacceptable".

"We have been saying the 15% rise would be a 130% increase, but they are actually looking at a 230% increase if you look at council's printed matter.

"So if you're paying \$1,000 a year in rates, it will go up to \$2,280 in six years time."

Sources close to council indicate that the most probable option to be approved is 10% for four years cumulative.

"It's a compromise to reach a team position," the source said.

\* See more rate rise stories on page 7 and 14.



☒ News ☐ Business

## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Numbers game for rate rise

By Margaret Paton

Oct. 31, 2013, midnight

A 15 per cent rate rise over six years for Blayney Shire Council ratepayers may well be the community's preferred rate rise option, a community meeting held at Blayney heard last Thursday evening.

The three options on the table are to maintain the rate peg of 3.3%, a permanent (six year) 10% per year cumulative increase or a permanent (six year) 15% per year cumulative rise.

However, Mayor Scott Ferguson and council's general manager Glenn Wilcox were since then more circumspect about the community's preferred figure.

Mayor Ferguson said: "I'm really looking forward to further engagement with our community re the special rate variation and hopefully make a decision soon on the future rate structure.

Council will make its decision at its November 11 meeting before asking the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to approve the rise.

The forum last Thursday was the last in a series council has held this month across the shire to gauge feedback from community about whether it wanted a 3.3%, 10% or 15% rate rise.

At each forum, attendees were asked to each cast their vote - these responses show the "15 per cent [option] has crept ahead", said forum facilitator Bob Campbell. See page 14 for 'Our Say'.

He said: "It's not a representative survey, but it's giving us an indication of how the community is thinking."

Mr Wilcox spoke about an independent Western Research Institute report completed recently which said "residents and ratepayers could afford the 15% rate rise across the board but there were conditions".

"If you're a farmer, you could afford that if the weather was fine ... the other factor was that commodity prices would have to go up," Mr Wilcox said.

"It is not in council's interest to start and push its ratepayers and residents to make a decision if they can eat today or if they can go away next week or next month."

What the options mean:

3.3% (current situation)

- \* Council staff numbers may be cut over time
- \* Service levels will deteriorate and possibly be cut
- \* Roads may not be maintained
- \* Assets to be downgraded
- \* About 20 shire bridges will be weight-capped or closed
- \* Council will make unpopular decisions
- \* Council won't be able to fund future works or upgrades to roads and bridges

10% cumulative over four years

n Lower level of service

n Improvements made to services, but delays in service

n No new developments will happen until roads, bridges, footpaths and buildings slowly improved

n Staff numbers to stay about the same

n Council will have to be "more ingenuous"

15% over six years cumulative

n Overall works program improved

n Council can borrow money - loans to be paid back over 10 to 30 years for major items such as bridge replacements

n High level of service





## Red Cross

Margaret Fairbank

The Blayney Branch of the Australian Red Cross met in The Cottage on October 14 with vice-president Verlie Fowler in the chair in the absence of president Robyn House.

Advice was received, in response to the branch's query regarding the mini meetings held at various centres in the zone, that these will restart next year.

Following the decision of the branch not to hold an Elegant Afternoon Tea this year, it was resolved that a Christmas street stall would be held in its place on 28 November. A roster will be drawn up at the meeting to be held as usual on Monday next, November 11 (Remembrance Day).

Shirley Cox was thanked for her offer to prepare and lay a tribute on behalf of the branch during the service at the Carrington Park Memorial Gates.

## War & peace theme for organ concert

This Sunday will be the last fundraising concert featuring the Kirkland Organ in Carcoar's Catholic church for the year as the olden organ will be dismantled for its restoration.

The theme, Martial Arts - Music & Verse for War & Peace, will include instrument music, serious and light-hearted songs of war and peace as well as poetry.

Catholic priest Father Tim said: "I am also trying to get a bagpiper to perform on the day."

"It will be a memorable experience and concert for Remembrance Day."

Entry will be by donation and includes afternoon tea. The event starts at 2pm.



## HELLO WORLD

Blayney's newest arrival

Baby Cowan

Yet-to-be-named baby Cowan was born on November 3. His parents are Nichole Bright and Luke Cowan.

He is a brother for Sebastian Cowan, 13, Izac Cowan, 9, Chaase Cowan, 7, and Lynkon Cowan, 5. Grandparents are Julie and Robert Amies of Millthorpe. Photo JUDE KEOGH

## Blue Light Disco "will happen"



A Blue Light Disco "will happen" in Blayney, according to organiser Bathurst PCYC's Senior Constable Scott Bowden, but not until 2014.

Due to a lack of quorum at last week's PCYC committee meeting - not enough board members attended - the organisation has deferred until its late November meeting a decision about when the Blayney disco will be held.

PCYC manager Shelley Hanrahan encouraged Blayney shire residents to consider volunteering to help organise the disco such as through helping sell tickets and running the mini canteen.

From left Bathurst PCYC manager Shelley Hanrahan and Senior Constable Scott Bowden, who is also based at the PCYC. Photo: Margaret Paton

## Farmers vote for 3.3% rate rise

Most of the rural landholders who attended last Thursday night's rate rise meeting organised by NSW Farmers voted for a 3.3% cent rate rise.

About 90 people attended the meeting including a television news crew.

Organiser Michael Rutherford of NSW Farmers' said the decision was "not unanimous".

He said 87 people voted for the 3.3% rate rise (the current rate situation), while three people put up their hands for 10% while no-one voted for a 15% rate rise over six years.

"The meeting was conducted in a polite and civil manner but it was long."

"It started at 7:30pm and I didn't get home until 11pm and I only live 20 minutes' drive away," said Mr Rutherford.

Those at the meeting also questioned why the current rating system "disadvantaged farmers four to one".

Mr Rutherford said: "The average rural farmland pays about \$1490 a year in rate compared with \$630 for the average block in town or a village."

"Most farmers have three or four blocks in

order to have a viable size farm and they are not making more than an average wage off it."

The meeting made a resolution to urge council and NSW Farmers to make "strong representation: to relevant government departments and authorities about the rate discrepancy, Mr Rutherford said.

"Council is very open for this to occur and they were extremely happy to see so many people at this meeting."

See also Blayney Chronicle columnist Michael Cobb's view from page 7.



Attending Tuesday's Women's Forum were from left Chris Smith of Blayney, Tamara Miller of Hobbys Yards, Cheryl Rutherford (seated) of Fitzgeralds Valley, Rosemary Reid of Millthorpe (at rear) and Maxine Meek of Hobbys Yards. Photo: Margaret Paton

## Time the issue at forum

About 50 women attended Tuesday's all-day women's forum run by Blayney Shire Council to encourage greater participation in community decision making.

Millthorpe resident Rosemary Reid, who by day is a drafts person for Orange City Council, said she was considering being a candidate for the next Blayney Shire Council

election.

"I've been interested for a long time, but if you're working full time, it's very hard to commit. I'm already involved in Blayney Tennis Club and junior tennis."

Mrs Reid said being a councillor would allow her to "do something for the community" and give council a women's

perspective that it currently lacks.

"I think women just often spend more time on [the issues] and listening to people."

Attendee Tamara Miller of Hobbys Yards said the forum had been "really interesting".

"The forum gives us a lot of reinforcement about skills that you have and what can be used. It gives a lot of different perspectives

on how women are treated."

She said wasn't looking to put her hand up to run for council as "I'm involved in several things including the Blayney Show society and my focus is community".

The forum was council's first and fulfilled a pledge by mayor Scott Ferguson to ensure council ran one in his term.



### UPDATE FROM THE DESK OF

Paul Toole

### Dangers of using an unlicensed tradesperson

There are substantial dangers involved with using an unlicensed tradesperson, with new research finding 90 per cent of people are putting themselves at risk by not using the free tradie licence check on the Fair Trading website. Homeowners who do not check whether a tradie is licensed risk

damage to their property or a substandard job by unskilled workers, which could leave them with a hefty bill.

There are four golden rules to follow before you hire a tradesperson, check their licence on the Fair Trading website, get at least three written quotes, ask for references and have a written contract if the work is over \$1,000.

To check a licence or to see the full results of the survey go to: [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au)

### Bush Fire Survival Plans

In light of the recent bushfires in our area this is a timely announcement for all residents to ensure they have thought about a Bush Fire Survival Plan with the launch of a new smartphone application. It is so important to be prepared, and to have a plan for what to do during a fire. Having a plan and taking decisive action can make the difference in surviving a bush fire. The MyFirePlan app complements the existing Bush Fire Survival Plan which is

available from local Fire Control Centres or through the NSW RFS website.

Anyone who lives near the bush should make a Bush Fire Survival Plan, which will help them with important decisions on when to leave, what to take and what to do with animals. Take a few moments to visit the MyFirePlan app is available through the Apple App store or Google Play by searching for 'Bush Fire Survival Plan' or 'MyFirePlan' and is free.

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☒ News ☐ Business

## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Rate rise approved: 6% for two years

By Margaret Paton

Nov. 14, 2013, midnight

Six per cent for two years: that's the rate rise Blayney Shire Council approved on Monday night to take effect in the next financial year if the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal gives it the go-ahead.

Council's decision - which will also see it consult the community in its review of the rating structure to be fairer to farmers - was unanimous although Councillor Geoff Braddon OAM was an apology for the meeting.

Mayor Scott Ferguson said the decision was a "very smart strategy" to take on an interim arrangement.

"It allows us to look at some of the events that will be happening the next two years and to build on that 6% and to go to our community to discuss the rate categories," he said.

Councillor Shane Oates spoke out in support of the approved motion: "The two years gives us a chance to get that rate rise out to the community and get their feedback; the 6% means we're able to tighten our belts and hopefully the community can understand we may not be able to deliver what they require in that time.

"In that two years there's a lot happening whether Kings Plains gold mine could come on line and the final report of the Local Government Review Panel," he said.

The panel made a preliminary recommendation earlier this year that Blayney merge with Orange and Cabonne local council areas possibly in the next seven years.

Councillor David Kingham said he was a "reluctant agreeer" to the resolution.

"I have stood for a differential rate. It's quite obvious the rating system goes back to the days of the early settlers where many people lived on properties like shepherds, farm hands, so there are more than one household per property in those days.

"Now there's often no-one living on those rural properties - they live in town and go

out to the farm and back.

"I think it's very unfair to have the onus on rural people to come up with four times as much [in rates] as people living in towns," he said.

The rate increase excludes the current special rate variation (SRV) for the construction of the community centre - this means residents will continue to pay that variation.

Council also pledged to "modify its long term financial plan" to look at increasing rates for four years from 2016-17 by six per cent for farmland and 10% for all other categories excluding the community centre SRV.

n See also, Mayor Scott Ferguson's column on the rate rise decision on page 5.



# Hail storm wreaks havoc



The highway near Lyndhurst early Monday afternoon in the wake of the freak hail storm there. Contributed photo.



Hail and rain swelled in Adelaide Street, Blayney, on Sunday. Photo: Claire Bell

Blayney State Emergency Service volunteers were called out to 11 jobs on Sunday evening and Monday after a freak hail storm and heavy rain hit Blayney.

It reportedly dumped 50mm of rain and hail in less than an hour at about 6pm on Sunday. Lyndhurst was also hit by hail at about 2pm on Monday.

Lee Hostel, Blayney Hospital and Health One were damaged as well as the dental surgery and eight homes, said local controller for the Blayney SES Reg Rendall.

"We had 11 volunteers on. I've never seen hail like this since we came here in 1986," he said.

Lee Hostel was worst hit, said Mr Rendall, because of its flat roof.

President of Lee Hostel, John Wilcox, said the hail had banked up in the gutters causing leaks into the activities/recreation room, flooring in the craft room and entrance as well as the kitchen.

"It's major damage. We're virtually going to have take the roof off and the carpets are gone. Insurance will cover it," he said.

The SES's Mr Rendall said: "The hail had nowhere to go so the rain could not get away, so the water came in flooding through the light fitting and we had to cut power to the lights for fear of electrocution."

Residents' rooms were

> The SES had to prop up a leaking ceiling at the 'solarium' rest area at Blayney Hospital.

v President of Lee Hostel, John Wilcox points to the damaged ceiling being propped up in the hostel's 'pink room'.



not affected, and the dining room continued to operate.

Mr Rendall said he also took a call from the dental surgery after a blocked guttering had led to water coming in a ceiling sinking.

Meanwhile, a media spokesman for the Western NSW Local Health District said Blayney Hospital and Health one suffered storm damage.

"We had leaks in various areas - the kitchen, administration area, aged care wing, solarium and Health One.

"It wasn't extensive waster damage but the ceiling in the solarium was damage and the SES were called out and have propped it up so the area is now restricted."

The SES hotline number for emergencies is 131 500.

## Woolshed scoops heritage grant

The ongoing preservation of our shire's history is assured following the announcement of a Heritage Grant of \$10,000 to prepare an archival recording for Old Errowanbang Woolshed, which dates back to 1886.

Heritage Minister Robyn Parker said "The NSW Government recognises the important role that our State's diverse heritage plays in creating a shared understanding of our cultural history."

"The grants will enable communities to take a hands-on approach to conserving historic places as an investment for future generations." The Minister said

Paul Toole Bathurst MP welcomed the grant said: "The Errowanbang Woolshed is one of the most interesting woolsheds of the Central West region of NSW.

"With 40 stands, Errowanbang Woolshed is one of the largest woolsheds

in the region. Of these stands, 26 have never been adapted for mechanical shearing, providing clear evidence of two major phases of shearing practices in Australia.

"The original stands retain virtually all of their original fabric - a clear picture of the working of hand shearing. Names painted on the stands provide evidence of some of the well-known shearers who worked at the station in the nineteenth century.

"The NSW Heritage Grants program is designed to provide direct financial assistance to private owners, councils and community based organisations to maintain and improve their heritage assets and the NSW Government is committed to conserving, revitalising and caring for places of heritage significance," Mr Toole said.



### Mayoral Comment

with Councillor Scott Ferguson

After months of meetings and community consultation councillors resolved on Monday night to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a special rate variation of 6% over two years also to include in council's long term financial plan a potential split rate of 6% and 10% for rural and residential rates respectively.

While this is a different proposal that was put to the community we believe that it is a positive interim strategy to have over the next two years to work on all the issues that came out of our community consultation and confirm that we have listened to the concerns raised.

It has become clear that our rating structure needs a full and comprehensive review, which we will undertake with the community and that council will always try and achieve the balance between the affordability of rates and the services and infrastructure that council provides.

There is no doubt that it will be very tight over the next couple of years, just like in all businesses throughout our region but councillors are prepared to make hard decisions to prioritise the spending of available money and resources.

While it is difficult to plan for the future, we do know that in 2 years time things might look different. The final review into Local Government should indicate the future for Blayney Shire, we would have had the next State election, the review into the Local

## Load limit placed on bridge

Blayney Shire Council has placed a five tonne gross weight limit on the Felltimber Road bridge over Coombing Creek near Carcoar, after an inspection found it to be unsafe for heavy vehicle use.

The timber bridge with concrete deck is about 2.2 kilometres South of Carcoar and six kilometres north of the intersection of Mandurama Road and Fell Timber Road.

Blayney Shire Council's director infrastructure services, Grant Baker said the defects had been recorded as part of a recent inspection.

"The inspection revealed a number of structural failures.

"The five tonne gross limit means that no trucks or heavy vehicles can use it. Council staff have erected signs on the approaches to the bridge and at both the intersection of Mount Macquarie Road and Fell Timber Road in the north, and at the Mandurama Road and Fell Timber Road in the south, advising of the new weight limit. A 40km/h speed restriction shall also apply until further notice," he said.

"Investigative works shall be programmed immediately to prepare options for the replacement/rehabilitation of the existing structure".

Government Act will have happened (including rate structures) the Community Centre Special Rate will be finished, we will have some results on our initiatives with our Alliance partners, Cabonne and Wellington and we'll know if the Federal Governments Roads to Recovery Program will continue. All these events have potential to influence future rate adjustments.

Like a lot of councils, Blayney Shire has a backlog of road maintenance and bridge liabilities that won't go away over the next few years yet it was clear that 15% was too much too quick for our community and I thank everyone who participated in public meetings, wrote to Council and completed surveys.

We believe that we have found a balance at this time and I encourage everyone to continue to have input to this ongoing partnership between council and our community.



**HELLO WORLD**  
Blayney's newest arrival



Letisha Norris with her daughter, Piper Jayne Berrington. Photo: Chris Seabrook

**Piper Jayne BERRINGTON**

Piper Jayne Berrington is the newborn daughter of Letisha Norris and Thomas Berrington of Blayney. The Gorgeous baby girl was born on November 1 and is the couple's first child and weighed 3480 grams at birth.

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## Blayney Chronicle [\(1\)](#)

# Farmers' talkfest rates a mention

By Margaret Paton

Nov. 28, 2013, midnight



NSW Farmers chiefs and local farmers met in Blayney on Tuesday including from left Michael Rutherford, chair of the Blayney district NSW Farmers, Fiona Simson, association president, George King, owner/operator of Coombing Park at Carcoar (standing) and Matt Brand, association CEO.

Council rate discrepancies between farm and urban land, the planned local rate rise and getting farmers talking were hot issues at a lunch meeting of members and non-members of NSW Farmers' on Tuesday at the Tatts Hotel in Blayney.

Nine Blayney farmers met with key people from NSW Farmers - its president Fiona Simson and CEO Matt Brand.

Chair of the Blayney district of NSW Farmers, Michael Rutherford, said he was "pretty happy" with how the 'meet and greet' went as it included association members as well as non members.

"We wanted to enhance two-way communication between policy makers - in the association and for local government - and give local farmers the ability to have some input," he said.

"We're working on a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Authority about the discrepancy between rural and town rates and farmers' capacity to pay the planned increased Blayney Shire Council rates," he said.

"Membership [of the association] has dropped off dramatically in the past 10 years and we recognise the need for a farmer's voice. We simply can not do it ourselves [individually] - we need the organisation to speak up on our behalf."

Wild dog and pig control were also on the agenda.

NSW Farmers' Mr Brand said: "We have a wild dog co-ordinator who works in the western division of NSW and talked about the importance of a co-ordinated approach."

It was proving more effective for all rather than just some land users in a geographical region to work together on the issue, he said.

The association has picked up wild-pig controlling tips from Queensland and is looking at implementing those tips in NSW.

Mr Brand said: "The challenge is there are less farmers and without a collective voice the industry will continue to be fragmented, that's why it's important to have a body to represent NSW farmers."

Mr Brand said he told attendees NSW Farmers had simplified its membership structure to introduce a flat fee of \$399 plus GST for annual membership.

Mr Rutherford said he was looking for a guest speaker to talk about local government rates at the association's next local meeting.



# Blayney Chronicle

DECEMBER

Incorporating the LYNDHURST SHIRE CHRONICLE

Thursday, November 19, 2013

PRICE \$1.50 (incl GST)

THIS WEEK



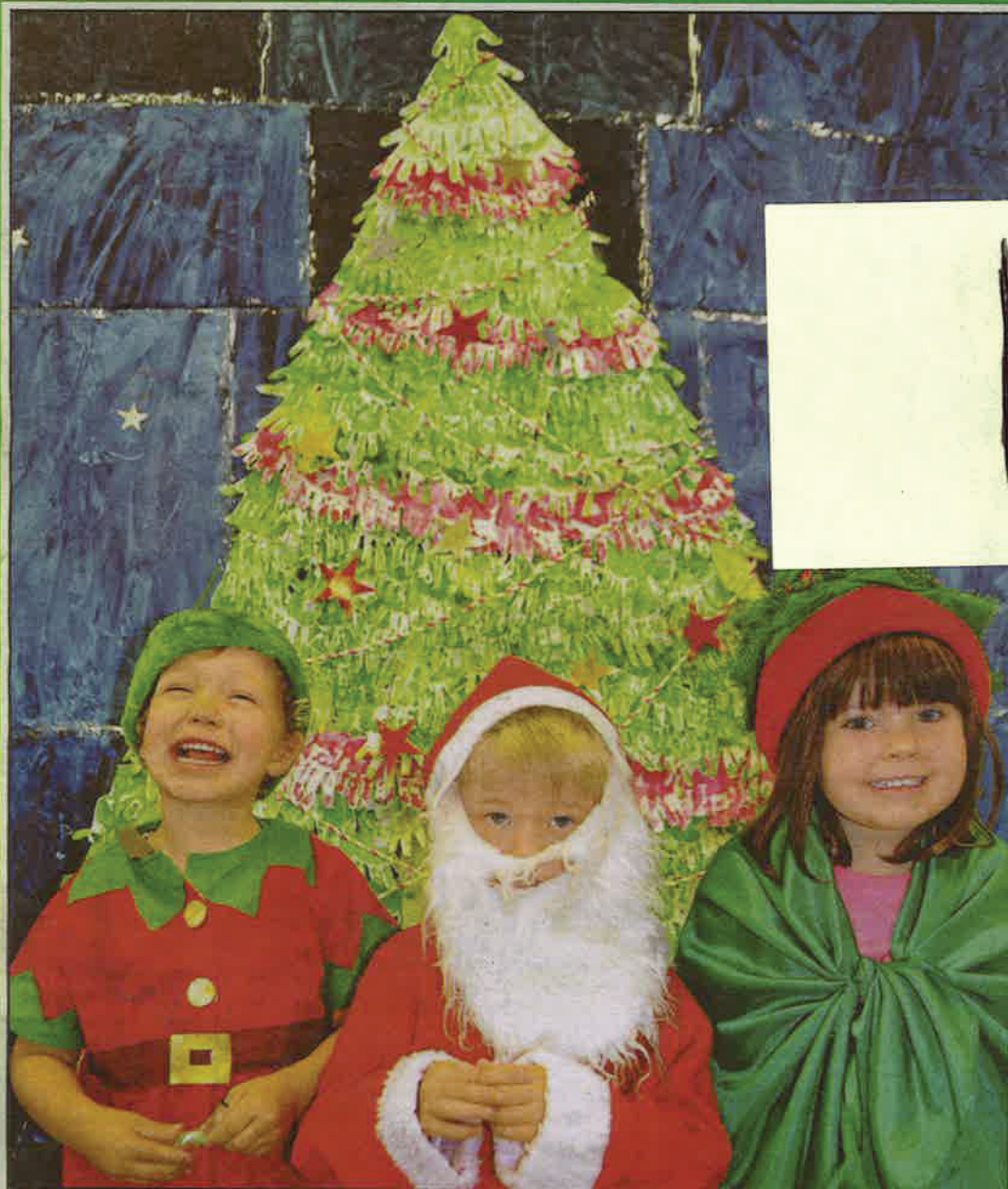
**Christmas  
Carols  
Page  
6**



**Christmas  
parties  
Pages  
8, 10 & 11**



**Junior  
Tennis  
Champs-  
Page 18**



## Festive cheer for hostel

Decked out ready to deliver festive cheer to Lee Hostel yesterday morning along with their fellow attendees at Blayney Early Learners were from left William Wilson, Angus Oldham and Megan Stammers. Photo: Margaret Paton

## Council's \$21.4M bill to fix assets

A cool \$21.4M - that's what Blayney Shire Council estimates it needs to "bring up to a satisfactory condition/standard" its assets, according to a Special Schedule No. 7 document lodged as part of its annual report for 2012-13 released last week. Its cash position is just \$12M.

And the repair bill is expected to increase as the document shows council spent just \$3.3M last financial year on asset maintenance, \$1.7M less than required annually to "maintain assets in a satisfactory standard".

Asset categories listed include buildings, other structures, public roads,

sewerage and drainage works.

Public roads and council offices were ranked four, "poor, renewal required", with no assets ranked the worst, very poor "urgent renewal/upgrading required".

Roads need more than \$19M of work and the offices just half a million to bring them up to standard.

Council's offices have since been renovated in this financial year.

Blayney shire general manager Glenn Wilcox and mayor Scott Ferguson did not respond to the Blayney Chronicle's request to 'please explain'.

## Hospital care under attack

A Blayney family has hit out at the State-run public health service for its poor treatment of a family member over the past week.

Dee Hanrahan, 45, had a gastro bug, causing her to vomit and pass out several times, before she was admitted to Orange Hospital on Tuesday last week.

Her husband, Allan, said despite there being a section of empty beds nearby, she was transferred from Orange due to "lack of beds" to Blayney Hospital which is where more trouble brewed for her.

"As soon as we got [to Blayney hospital] because she's a caeliac and lactose allergic [hospital staff] said couldn't feed her because they didn't have that stuff.

"So my daughter came home, got her bread, jam and milk and coffee and went to IGA and bought soup and other things to eat and that's how we've been able to feed her," he said.

Mr Hanrahan said he had trouble understanding why his wife's diet would be an issue: "My wife can go to the Exchange Hotel and get a meal - it's just an old country pub, it's where we go out so why can't the hospital feed her?"

He said he was also concerned about his wife's care at Blayney hospital due to

apparent short staffing. His wife is still struggling to "keep liquids and food down".

"My wife hit the buzzer [at Blayney Hospital] for a nurse, waited for 15 minutes and a cleaner came in to see if she's right and what she's wanted.

"It's killing me seeing her in the hospital

"She is stressing - the staff have been great - I am blaming the government when you have to have a cleaner come in to see if you're alright," said Mr Hanrahan.

"This is just wrong - it's not towards the staff, it's towards the government - they shouldn't have sent her to Blayney Hospital - she told them she didn't want to go to Blayney."

A spokesman for Western NSW Local Health District said it "takes all complaints seriously" and encouraged people with concerns to contact their local facility.

"Blayney MPS can accommodate dietary requirements on request, including those involving caeliacs and lactose intolerance," he said but would not comment on specific patients due to "patient confidentiality".

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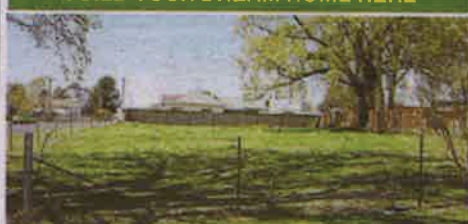


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### Christmas Hours

- Christmas Eve Closed from 1pm
- Open Monday 30/12/13 9am - 5pm
- Open Tuesday 31/12/13 9am - 12 noon
- Re-open Monday 6th January

*Merry Christmas  
and a Happy  
New Year*