

**MINUTES OF THE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**
TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2024
COMMENCING AT 6:30 PM
AT THE LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS



LEETON
SHIRE COUNCIL

Councillors:

Cr. George Weston, Cr. Sandra Nardi, Cr. Krystal Maytom, Cr. Stephen Tynan, Cr. Michael Kidd, Cr. Boston Edwards, Cr. Tracey Morris, Cr. Nicholas Wright and Cr. Sarah Tiffen.

Staff:

Jackie Kruger (General Manager), Avtar Singh (Director Corporate/CFO), Michelle Evans (Director Economic and Community Development), Tracy Pearce-Bradley (Executive Manager People and Culture), Sarah Graham (Manager Governance, Corporate and Customer Service) and Terry Schmidt (Communications Coordinator).

Media:

Talia Pattison (Journalist, The Irrigator)

LEETON SHIRE COUNCIL

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1. CIVIC PRAYER

Pastor Jeffrey Cottom (Leeton CRC Church)

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Wiradjuri Elder William Ingram

3. APOLOGIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE BY COUNCILLORS

Nil

4. PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

Nil

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Nil

6. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

GENERAL MANAGER'S MATTERS

ITEM 6.1.1. OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS OF OFFICE

OCM 24/53

Resolved

THAT Council:

1. Notes the oaths or affirmations completed by each Councillor elected at the Local Government Election held on Saturday 14 September 2024.
2. Notes the minutes of this meeting will serve as the official record of the completion of the oath or affirmation by each Councillor:
 - Cr. Michael Kidd
 - Cr. Sarah Tiffen
 - Cr. Sandra Nardi
 - Cr. Tracey Morris
 - Cr. George Weston
 - Cr. Krystal Maytom
 - Cr. Boston Edwards
 - Cr. Stephen Tynan
 - Cr. Nicholas Wright
2. All Councillors acknowledged receiving and have read the Leeton Shire Council Code of Conduct.

(Moved Cr. Kidd, seconded Cr. Morris)

ITEM 6.1.2. ELECTION OF THE MAYOR

The General Manager advised that she has delegated the Manager Governance, Corporate and Customer Service to be the Returning Officer for the election of the Mayor in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

OCM 24/52

Resolved

THAT:

1. As the sole nominee for the position of Mayor, Cr. George Weston was declared the Mayor for term of office from 8 October 2024 to September 2026.
2. The Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government, the Chief Executive of Local Government NSW, the Executive Officer of Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) and the Secretary of NSW County Mayors be advised of the result of the election of the Mayor for the period from the 8 October 2024 to September 2026.

(Moved Cr. Kidd, seconded Cr. Morris)

ITEM 6.1.3. ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR

The General Manager advised that she has delegated the Manager Governance, Corporate and Customer Service to be the Returning Officer for the election of the Deputy Mayor in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

Cr. Michael Kidd and Cr. Stephen Tynan were both nominated for the position of Deputy Mayor by the Returning Officer.

OCM 24/51

Resolved

THAT:

1. The Returning Officer proceeds with the election of the Deputy Mayor in accordance with the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* for the Mayoral term of office from 8 October 2024 to September 2026.
2. The method of electing the Deputy Mayor be by the Ordinary Ballot Voting Method.
3. The Secretary and the Chief Executive of the Local Government NSW be advised of the result of the election of the Deputy Mayor for the period from the 8 October 2024 to September 2026.

4. Cr. Michael Kidd was elected to serve as Deputy Mayor until September 2026.

(Moved Cr. Sandra Nardi, seconded Cr. Tracey Morris)

ITEM 6.1.4. POTENTIAL MOTIONS FOR SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

OCM 24/50

Resolved

THAT Council:

1. Notes the registration of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and General Manager for the 2024 LGNSW Annual Conference.
2. Confirms the two (2) voting delegates at the LGNSW Conference to be the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the substitute voting delegate, should one be required, to be the General Manager.
3. Approves the following proposed motions for submission to the 2024 LGNSW Business Paper:

MOTION 1: Increased Support for Housing Initiatives in Rural and Regional Australia

THAT LGNSW calls on the Australian Government and NSW Government to work collaboratively with Councils, key bodies and interest groups to – as a matter of priority – provide direct financial and infrastructure support for affordable housing in rural NSW areas that face housing shortages.

MOTION 2: Protect Communities from Water Buybacks

THAT LGNSW calls on the Australian and NSW Governments to recognize the socio-economic impacts of water buybacks in the Murray-Darling Basin and to implement measures to safeguard impacted rural and regional communities in the Murray-Darling Basin.

THAT LGNSW urges the NSW Government to take a proactive approach in conducting comprehensive assessments of the potential impacts of buybacks and to implement targeted actions to support affected areas.

These are crucial for achieving balanced social, economic, and environmental outcomes from water use while protecting long-established regional communities and water-related industries that contribute significantly to the nation's economy, food security, and social fabric.

Motion Background

The objective of this motion is to urgently seek both federal and state recognition and state-level action to ensure that the socio-economic effects of water buybacks are properly and expeditiously acknowledged and

managed. The goal is to support rural and regional communities and enable them to thrive despite the challenges posed by water buybacks.

Preserving and optimizing the irrigation schemes and communities established over a century ago is crucial for the nation's interests. These systems are integral to producing diverse, safe, reliable, and affordable food, contributing significantly to agricultural strength and community resilience. Water availability directly influences the health and prosperity of communities.

The socio-economic impacts of previous water buybacks are already evident. Further reducing irrigation water availability threatens local economies, raises water prices, and increases food costs, placing additional pressure on families, especially in high inflation periods. Future actions must be carefully managed to mitigate these effects.

The NSW Government needs to enhance its efforts beyond mere verbal support to assess and address the socio-economic impacts of water buybacks through improved modelling, tracking, and analysis. This will help communities, councils and government to understand how buybacks affect local economies, society, and businesses. Comprehensive assessments and targeted actions are essential for supporting affected areas so that communities aren't pushed to tipping point.

Commitment to genuine socio-economic neutrality testing is necessary to understand the impacts both locally and regionally. The Government should fund each potentially impacted Council to conduct a socio-economic condition analysis of their Local Government Area (LGA), creating a baseline for measuring impacts.

Engaging with communities is crucial for building trust and ensuring water management decisions align with local needs. Implementing measures that safeguard these communities' futures is a priority. Governments should allocate resources to Councils to facilitate meaningful engagement, including funding for expert advice and local-level assessments. This includes actively contributing to research and development in water efficient crop types and food and fibre products within Basin communities.

Through its advocacy LGNSW will aim to ensure that water management policies are sensible and supportive of the communities they affect. Further, LGNSW will emphasise that water recovery initiatives must not harm the social or economic well-being of regional communities.

MOTION 3: Smarter Process to Support Immigrant Doctors to Work in Rural and Regional Communities

THAT LGNSW calls on the NSW and Federal Government to streamline the assessment and registration process for doctors with foreign qualifications. This process should be optimised to facilitate the quicker integration of qualified international doctors into the Australian medical workforce, particularly in regional and rural areas.

MOTION 4: Enhanced Incentives to Attract Police Workforce to Rural Locations

THAT LGNSW calls on the NSW Government to introduce and enhance incentives for rural locations that are not currently covered by the Special Remote Incentive System, in order to address the pressing issues related to recruitment and retention of police staff in these areas.

MOTION 5: What's Good for the Goose is Good for the Gander – Aligning Fees & Costs Imposed on Local Government with the Rate-Peg

THAT, in the interests of NSW Councils' financial sustainability and in the interests of slowing down cost shifting, LGNSW calls on the NSW State Government and Office of Local Government to align government determined statutory fees / charges and government determined service costs to the IPART determined annual rate increase, ideally at the highest rate-peg increase for statutory fees (that have lagged for many years) and lowest rate-peg increase for government determined service costs (that have increased well above the rate-peg in recent years).

Motion background

Many fees and charges are set by statute, but many have seen little or no increase for over a decade. Planning fees and stormwater management charges are a case in point. As a result, councils have increasingly picked up the gap in the cost of delivering these services using general rate income. Similarly, Councils are at the receiving end of exponentially increasing service costs, like audit fees and emergency services levies, many of which have increased significantly above the IPART determined rate-peg. As a result, Councils have increasingly had to close the funding gap at the expense of other local Council services or by accepting a reducing operating result.

Councils are not able to make up the difference by charging more rates due to rate pegging. This makes for an uneven playing field. It is therefore being recommended that government-imposed fees / charges or costs should be contained in alignment with rate-peg increases.

As IPART has now moved to variable rate increases for different Councils, it is being recommended that the lag in statutory fee/charge increases be aligned with the highest rate increase annually from now onwards (to make up for decades of underfunding), and the proposed future increases of costs such as audit fees and emergency service levies be limited to the lowest rate-peg in NSW (in recognition of the exponential increase in costs in recent years).

4. Affords the Mayor delegated authority to submit any further motions after consulting with Councillors prior to the deadline for submitting Motions.

(Moved Cr. Michael Kidd, seconded Cr. Tracey Morris)

7. CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING

There has been no further business, the meeting closed at 7:55 pm.

..... signed by
the Chairman of the meeting held on
29 October 2024 at which meeting the
signature hereon was subscribed.