

MESSAGE FROM YOUR MAYOR

I would like to alert local residents and ratepayers to changes being planned to the way Councils in Western NSW will have to operate in the future under legislation currently being drafted by the NSW State Government.

The Department of Office of Local Government and Department of Premier and Cabinet have released a detailed discussion paper in relation to the Government's Far West Initiative which sets out the Government's preferred approach to Local Government reform for the eight Councils in the Western Division.

However, the discussion outlines a model that will see a regional organisation set up to handle various functions currently handled by Councils, other functions that will be undertaken jointly at a regional/local level and some remaining with Councils.

Like most new Government proposals, the devil is in the detail and this is one of the main reasons Walgett Shire prefers to stand alone whilst there is any uncertainty around how the new model would work, how it would be funded and what impacts there would be on existing local jobs and service delivery.

Residents are urged to consider the advantages and disadvantages the proposed changes will have on the quality of life throughout Western NSW which covers more than 40% of the State.

These details will be published on Council's website shortly, along with various submissions Council has prepared recently in addressing the need for reform.

Council's underlying aim is to ensure that the best interests of the Shire are safeguarded in not only the immediate future but the medium and longer term as well.

Walgett Shire believes it is financially sound and sustainably viable well into the future. It is concerned that proposed improvements in local services will not be forthcoming as present State and Federal service functions and funding have not yet been properly identified in the reform process that has been carried out so far.

I encourage all residents to have their say in the proposed changes to our Local Council and ask the Department of Premier and Cabinet/ Office of Local Government as many questions as possible at the consultation sessions being held around the Shire. Keep in mind the submissions close at 5pm on Friday 14 October 2016.

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY...

Your views on this proposed approach to regional governance will help shape the next steps in developing the Far West Initiative. Council urges community members, community groups and businesses to have their say.



Visit www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au and follow the link to the Far West Initiative for a full list of consultation sessions, background information and to make a submission



Visit the NSW Government's Have your Say Website at www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au



For more Information
Call [02 4228 4100](tel:0242284100)



Written Submissions can be mailed to: Office of Local Government - Far West Initiative Locked Bag 3015, Nowra NSW 2541

Input of Residents will play a vital role in determining the future of Local Government in the Far West Region and Walgett Shire in particular