

From the Chief



Caretaker Period

The legislated caretaker period will take effect from 4pm on **Thursday, 4 September 2025** and end on the day after the returning officer declares the results of the Councillor election. During this period, Local Governments cannot make decisions or take actions that meet the definition of a “significant act” which essentially includes key steps to major commercial transactions (worth \$250,000 or more) and most decisions which relate to a material and/or ongoing aspect of Council’s operations .

Local Governments may be able to do a significant act during the caretaker period if:

- the decision was made prior to Caretaker Period and prescribed local public notice requirements are met;
- they have a legal obligation to do the significant act; or
- the significant act is necessary for proper operations or due an emergency and they receive authorisation from the Departmental CEO.

Roe Dam Standpipe

For readers who are unaware, Water Corporation recently disabled the Roe Dam standpipe causing distress and significant adverse impact to the operations of the local farmers. Water Corporation reserves the right to disable any infrastructure that they own at any time and at their sole discretion; in this case the standpipe was disabled owing to concerns over bacterial contaminants in the water.

Water Corporation has been requested to provide material to explain their process and decision making, but this has not materialised.

Our CEO Rebecca McCall should, in her absence, be acknowledged for taking immediate action and advocating for the affected community members. Although progress has been slow due to the lumbering machinations of State Government and lack of rainfall, we are pleased to advise that the Roe Dam standpipe has finally been reactivated and should remain so, pending any issues with ongoing water sampling.

In order to avoid this becoming a recurring issue for our affected farmers, Council is investigating options to assume control and responsibility for the standpipe at Row Dam - though we don’t know exactly what this solution might look like yet. In assuming control of the reserve and the infrastructure, Council would look to:

1. Provide more proactive and timely communication regarding the availability of water to stakeholders
2. Improve the infrastructure on site.

Mount Walker Standpipe

Un-related to the Roe Dam Standpipe, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has been investigating their disused infrastructure in the area and has nominated to re-drill the bore and install new hardware at the old Mount Walker standpipe.

Access will be limited due to the on-site storage being a 250KL tank, but this will offer farmers in the area another water source (albeit limited) for commercial use.

Some preliminary site works have already been completed, with final installation due around the 24th of August. Access will be granted after the tank has been given enough time to fill up, with a rough ETA being around the end of August.

Audit Risk and Improvement Committee independent members

On behalf of Council, we are pleased to announce that in anticipation of legislative and regulatory reform of Local Governments, that Council's 'Audit and Risk Committee' has:

1. Been rebranded as the "Audit Risk and Improvement Committee"
2. Two new independent members that will oversee committee meetings and provide feedback to Council and management.

Our new independent committee members are Rhona Cole (who will Chair the committee) and Gina DeLuis (who will be Rhonda's deputy and chair meetings in her absence). Council and management will forever welcome community participation in Council's affairs and decision-making processes - we look forward to working with Rhonda and Gina to ensure that our processes are compliant and transparent.

Attendance at Council and Committee meetings

For readers that aren't aware: all members of the public (not just ratepayers) are entitled to attend the ordinary meeting of Council each month. Members of the public are entitled to ask questions of Council regarding any aspect of Council's operations or regarding specific items on the monthly agenda. Upon commencement of further reforms included in the *Local Government Amendment Bill 2024*, most committee meetings of Council will also be open to the public.

Members of the public will not be turned away should they wish to attend a meeting of Council or committee, except for any portion of the meeting that includes matters for which a meeting may be closed, as prescribed by the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Individuals or community groups that wish to have structured meetings or make specific proposals to Council may liaise with the CEO to arrange for their attendance at an informal meeting of Council, where freeform discussion may be more suitable to the subject matter. Informal meetings of Council will remain closed to the public, though readers should note that Council decisions cannot (and are not) be made at informal meetings.

Hockey light installation

We are pleased to share that the final work for the installation of the new hockey lights is commencing on the 19th of August, with the new poles scheduled to be installed on the 22nd of August. Electrical work and testing should be completed next week, with the lights hopefully being operational by the 29th of August, pending there being no further delays.

Thomas Street subdivision

Site works by Council's contractors are due for imminent completion. We are currently waiting on Western Power to finalise the electrical connection, which will allow the contractors to test all the appliances and then allow Shire to then resume possession of the site and undertake earthworks, fencing and landscaping. We would like to thank all those concerned with their patience throughout the construction of these additional residences which are essential to ensure that Council can continue to attract and retain quality staff.