

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Resilience will ensure we survive and prosper

The Bland Shire's steely resilience has seen us survive and prosper for more than 100 years.

We have regularly faced adversity - such as record drought, the withdrawal of services and closure of business and industry - and each time managed to come out the other side stronger than ever.

In many ways, the Bland Shire is at its best when our backs are against the wall.

The last few weeks have thrown up another dose of adversity with news that the Target Country store will close and the announcement that up to 52 jobs will be lost at the Lake Cowal gold mine.

Just as we have done each time a challenge has been thrown in the path of this community over the last century, it is time for us to stand together and rise again.

What makes the Bland Shire so special? Is it our wonderful parks and gardens, our first class sporting facilities or the schools which nurture our children in a safe and supportive environment?

While those things and many others make our community great, what makes the Bland Shire truly special is its people.

Our unwavering community pride will ensure our town not only survives but thrives.

Bland Shire Council is actively seeking alternative new industries to come to the Bland Shire to bring new jobs and opportunities.

We have also cast a wide net to

identify and attract new business to town to replace Target and ideally complement what is already offered through our hard working local businesses.

When they are presented we need to embrace these opportunities.

In the meantime as a community we need to continue to support local businesses. Support for our local business creates local jobs and is a headline advertisement for a progressive and vibrant town and Shire in which people will want to live.

Just as our people are our greatest asset they are also the greatest advertisement for our Shire.

We need to spread a positive message about the Bland Shire and why it is a great place to live, work, raise a family and establish a business.

We are a wonderful community with a lot to offer. Let 's spread the message far and wide and ensure the community we have been so privileged to be part of can continue to be enjoyed and appreciated for generations to come.



Councillor Neil Pokoney

WEST WYALONG LANDFILL WILL BE CLOSED ON ANZAC DAY Saturday April 25th

Community campaign still on Target

Bland Shire Council General Manager, Ray Smith, will hand deliver a petition signed by more than 1600 people to Target Australia's national headquarters on Monday, May 4.

Mr Smith, who will be in Melbourne the night before competing in the Wings for Life World Run for charity, will take the drive down the Princes Highway to personally hand over the petition to General Manager of Corporate Affairs, Jim Cooper, at Target's head office in Geelong. The petitions were circulated earlier this month through Business West Wyalong in conjunction with Bland Shire Council and call on Wesfarmers and Target Australia to reconsider the impending closure of the Target Country store in West Wyalong. The petition calls on "... Wesfarmers management to remember the organisations origins and be true to the values of your company, honour the social responsibility you have towards your employees and not walk away from rural communities such as the Bland Shire which have supported you for over 100 years." The Bland Shire community has been rocked by the announcement that Target plans to close its West Wyalong store for good on Saturday, June 6. The closure will force local residents to travel 80 kilometres to purchase essential items such as underwear and children's clothing. The community has rallied strongly against the closure with the 1600 plus petition signatures complemented by a turnout of more than 400 people at a community rally held in West Wyalong on Thursday, April 9. Council has also offered to meet with Target and Wesfarmers management to discuss options to help make the West Wyalong store viable and sustainable in the long term. While Target has to date ignored cries from the West Wyalong

community to reconsider, Mr Smith said it was not in the Bland Shire's nature to give up. "No matter what the odds, throwing in the towel is simply not the Bland Shire way," Mr Smith said. "Business West Wyalong and Council will continue to lobby both Wesfarmers and Target to reconsider and at least sit down with us to discuss options to save the store. "In the meantime, Council will continue to work with the landlord to identify and target new businesses and opportunities to fill the void." While in Melbourne, Mr Smith has also scheduled a meeting with the agent for the owner of the West Wyalong Target building, Tony Boothroyd to discuss strategies to attract a new tenant to replace Target after the scheduled closure date. On his way home, Mr Smith will also visit Warracknabeal to investigate a clothing co-operative which was successfully established following the closure of the local Target store last year. Even if the West Wyalong store does close its doors as planned on June 6, Mr Smith said the terrific community support shown for the Save Target campaign could help entice new business and investment to West Wyalong. "The tremendous show of community support at the rally and the large number of petition signatures collected are a great advertisement for any new franchise or business considering establishing in West Wyalong. "Council is exploring a range of options, many of which have been brought forward by members of our community, to hopefully deliver an outcome which best suits the needs of our community moving forward."

Office Hours: 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Friday

Library Hours: 10am-5pm Monday to Friday & 8.30am - 12noon Saturday

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