

Bland Shire Council Notices

Council will fight to stand alone

Bland Shire Council this week lodged a submission to stand alone under the State Government's Fit for the Future package for Local Government reform.

Council's submission under the Fit for the Future (FFTF) Council Improvement Model is supported by the results of a recent Bland Shire Local Government reform survey which showed overwhelming community opposition to amalgamation.

All Councils in New South Wales were required to submit a FFTF proposal to either merge with another Council/s, operate as a Rural Council or undertake a self improvement process which demonstrates how they meet or intend to meet a series of seven financial benchmarks set by the State Government.

While Council meets all of the criteria for a Rural Council, this was not a preferred option of Bland Shire as the implications of becoming a Rural Council have not been made clear by the State Government.

With the community strongly opposed to amalgamations, Council made its submission under the Council Improvement Model and, based on a number of assumptions, has shown it will be able to meet five of the seven benchmarks within the next five years and six out of the seven benchmarks within 10 years.

Council currently meets two of the benchmarks (debt service ratio and real operating expenditure per capita).

Bland Shire Council has the second largest road network in the state (3,237 kilometres) and an area of 8558 square kilometres, which is the equivalent in area from Gosford to Wingecarribee and Manly to the Blue Mountains .

With annual depreciation calculated at \$5.4 million, much of which is due to the extensive road network (which was inherited from the State Government) and reduced funds to maintain the assets, the State Government's push to open Council's road network to larger and heavier vehicles, reductions in roads funding and two major flood events in 2011 and 2012, Council has set a long term plan towards meeting the infrastructure backlog benchmark (2021-22) and potentially the asset maintenance ratio.

Council will work towards this by reviewing service levels and depreciation while also undertaking a complete review of building assets and

Measure/benchmark	2013-2014 performance	Achieves FFTF benchmark	Forecast 2016-2017 performance	Achieves FFTF benchmark
Operation Performance Ratio (greater than or equal to break even average over three years)	-19.94%	No	-1.28%	No (by 2017-2018)
Own Source Revenue Ratio (greater than 60% average over three years)	44.34%	No	86.75%	Yes
Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio (greater than 100% average over three years)	51.41%	No	101%	Yes
Infrastructure backlog ratio (less than 2%)	3.29%	No	2.99%	No (by 2021-22)
Asset Maintenance Ratio (greater than 100% average over three years)	80%	No	74.11%	No (To be determined. Awaiting community consultation process)
Debt Service Ratio (greater than 0% and less than or equal to 20% average over three years)	1.13%	Yes	0.82%	Yes
Real operating expenditure per capita (a decrease in real operating expenditure per capita over time)	Decreasing	Yes	Decreasing	Yes

their role within the community, divesting those that are not required and focusing on asset renewal and infrastructure backlog rather than new assets. Community consultation will form an integral part in the development of asset maintenance strategies.

Council is also required to show an ongoing decrease in real operating expenditure. This is already being achieved and will need to continue to 2016-2017 and beyond through increased efficiencies and reductions in service levels.

While these factors make it difficult for Council to meet the FFTF benchmarks and some community expectations, the size of the road network and level of depreciation in particular make Bland Shire an undesirable merger partner for many Councils.

With the challenges facing Local Government into the future, Bland Shire Council is committed to retaining its identity and continuing to represent the exclusive interests of Bland Shire residents through local, grass roots democracy.

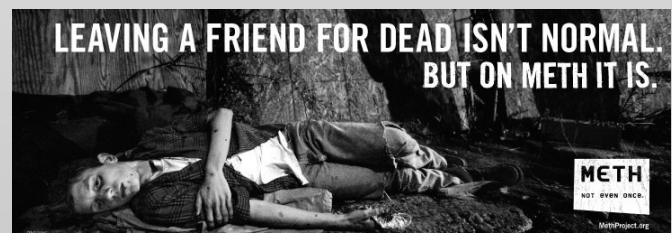
All Council FFTF submissions will be assessed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) which will deliver a report to the State Government in October.

Community Drug (ICE) Forum

Wednesday, 22 July at St Mary's Hall, West Wyalong from 6pm - for ages 13 and above

An expert panel including drug and alcohol related health professionals, a police officer, an ambulance officer and a previous ice user will inform and educate community members about methamphetamine (Ice) use, the effects and risks, treatment options and the extent of the problem currently facing communities.

Q & A opportunities following panellist presentations



TOWN RESEALS

Reseals in the following streets will occur between the dates of:

Tuesday 30 June, 2015 to Friday 10 July, 2015 depending on weather.

Reseals:

- Gladstone St: Between Church St and Operator St.
- Barnado St: Parking area.
- England St: Between Court St and Railway Rd.
- Court St: Between Church St and England St.
- Shire St: Between Church St and Water St.

Parts of the above streets will be closed to pedestrians and public vehicles. Residents of the above streets will have controlled access to their properties, with possible delays while the worksite is made safe.

If you require further information contact: Wayne Broad, Senior Co-ordinator Urban Bland Shire Council on phone 69722266

Office Hours: 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Friday

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

Phone: 026972 2266 Email: council@blandshire.nsw.gov.au

EMERGENCY NUMBERS - Council 0418 402 350,

Goldenfields Water 1800 800 917, Fire 000