



**Shelley Hancock**  
Minister for Local Government

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday, 23 November 2020

### **ARMIDALE REGIONAL COUNCIL**

Armidale councillors would be reinstated with strict controls and expert supervision under a proposed Performance Improvement Order (PIO) issued by the NSW Government.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock signalled a return of the elected body following six months of administration.

"After six months under administration we have a clear picture of the state of the council and exactly what needs to be done to strengthen its performance and restore community confidence," Mrs Hancock said.

"The proposed PIO provides a comprehensive roadmap to restore the proper and effective functioning of the council with strict controls and requirements and expert supervision to make sure the job gets done.

"Councillors would have 10 months to prove to the community that they can do the job they were elected to do before they face voters at the September council election."

The proposed PIO includes:

- Significant restrictions on the governing body's functions and decision-making powers. Councillors cannot terminate the general manager's employment, change its delegations, restructure the organisation or amend its councillor/staff interaction policy without the concurrence of the Office of Local Government
- Appointment of a financial controller to implement financial controls and improve financial accounting, monitoring, reporting and performance
- Appointment of a temporary adviser to strengthen the council's governance framework and monitor the conduct and performance of the governing body at council meetings, briefings and workshops
- The council must provide the general manager with adequate funds to maintain governance standards, deliver the operational plan, maintain infrastructure and improve financial ratios
- The council must review its code of meeting practice to ensure it complies with the NSW Government's model code, and
- Councillor briefings are to be open to the public where appropriate and councillors are prohibited from making decisions at briefings/workshops.

"I would like to thank interim administrator Viv May and acting general manager John Rayner for their significant efforts to restore the proper and effective functioning of the council," Mrs Hancock said.

As required by the Local Government Act, the Minister has provided the council with a notice of intention to issue the PIO and given it seven days to make a submission.

The Minister must consider any submission before making a final determination on whether to issue the PIO. It will be considered in conjunction with the interim administrator's final report which is due to be lodged on November 27.

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