

Media Release

Democracy to return to Central Darling Shire for the first time in over a decade

Thursday, 19 September 2024

Central Darling Shire Council will return to democratic representation for the first time in over 10 years after legislation passed in Parliament today introducing a new type of council model that will apply to Central Darling.

The shire, which is the largest local government area by size in NSW, has been under administration since 2013 due to significant financial and governance issues exacerbated by the council's unique challenges.

Under the government's new Rural and Remote Council model, the shire will continue to function the same as all other councils but will have a different structure.

Three councillors will be elected by the community and three councillors will be appointed by the NSW Government. This mixed governance model will ensure the community has a voice on local issues and that the councillors have relevant expertise to support the stable and effective operation of the council.

The new model was developed in consultation with community representatives, the Member for Barwon Roy Butler MP, NSW state agencies and Central Darling Shire Council administrator Robert Stewart.

The NSW Government will now turn to drafting the regulations and orders to enable the shire to be transitioned to a Rural and Remote Council and for elections to be held in the first half of 2025.

The NSW Government has provided a grant of \$477,782 to the council to support the transition to the new model, including for induction and training for the new councillors.

Central Darling Shire Council is currently the only local government area in administration, after Central Coast, Wingecarribee and Balranald councils all returned to having elected councillors at the recent local government elections.

Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig said:

"Communities across Central Darling Shire deserve representation and a stable council they can rely on to provide the local government services that many of us take for granted.

"The Minns Labor Government has found a way to return democracy to Central Darling after more than a decade.

"The new Rural and Remote Council model provides a way forward for the community, allowing them to have a say in who represents their local interests while ensuring a framework is in place to deliver local services and infrastructure in a more effective way.

"I'm pleased to see broad support across both Houses for this Bill which will help the council better manage the unique challenges it faces.

"In particular, we could not have got to the return of democracy for Central Darling without the support of the local member, Mr Roy Butler MP."

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