

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

18 MARCH 2021:

FORUM FOR WOMEN AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) will host a Women's Forum in Gundagai on Sunday 11 April 2021. The forum conducted by the Australian Local Governments Women's Association (ALGWA) NSW is to encourage and support women to stand for election to their local council.

The forums are hosted by Councils who express an interest, at no cost to them as the ALGWA NSW Executive members are volunteers. That is an excellent deal for councils with the will to see an increase of women councillors. Only approximately 28% of Councillors in NSW are female and some councils have no women representing their community. The forum is for all women in the region who are interested in standing for local government to attend. The forums encourage women to stand for Local Government elections and offer support to female staff members in leadership roles.

CGRC councillors Penny Nicholson and Leigh Bowden are encouraging local women who have an interest in Local Government to attend.

"I attended an ALGWA facilitated forum in Gundagai four years ago. I had not made the decision if I would run for election, in fact, I was still contemplating my decision when I walked through the door on the evening of the forum. The forum was an informal, honest, frank, and informative opportunity to ask any question that I considered and some I hadn't even thought of!" Cr Nicholson said.

"I walked out of the forum with my decision was made, I was going to throw my handbag into the LG election ring! Our communities and the people in our communities are our inspiration and that drives us to push harder and stronger. I am learning something new every step of the way. I have established a new network of friends and associates. I now have the ability to speak with confidence and knowledge whilst appreciating the people that surround me and support me. But most importantly, we as women have a voice! I have found my voice, a voice that I am not scared to use. If I had to use one word to summarise my Local Government journey, it would be "Grateful". I am grateful for every opportunity, grateful of my mentors and support network and grateful for the community that I love. If any women are considering standing for election, my advice is, come to the forum, ask questions, find out what is involved as you may just find your future in Local Government as I did, a decision that changed my life for the better!" Cr Nicholson said.

Councillor Leigh Bowden said women contribute to team building and relationships between councillors.

"I first thought of standing for Local Government in 2015. A forum held by ALGWA, in Gundagai, in August 2017, with Mayors Marianne Saliba and Judith Hannan, confirmed my resolve. Out of the nine councillors elected to CGRC only two are women, Cr Penny Nicholson, and me. As such CGRC is below the state average of the 30% of women representatives in Local Government. That ALGWA exists is fabulous. ALGWA provides support and encouragement for those of us who operate in this male dominated institution," Cr Bowden said.

ALGWA has developed a presentation, including a power point and a kit designed to assist women who have an interest in Local Government achieve these aims, and conducts a Q&A session. The ALGWA NSW Executive members also share their knowledge and experience to support women attendees.

To register your interest in attending the ALGWA Women's Forum to be held at the Gundagai Council Chambers on Sunday 11 April please call 1300 459 689. For more info visit: [ALGWA - Individual Membership Forums](#)

Photo and caption:

The ALGWA Women's Forum held in Gundagai four years ago helped Councillors Penny Nicholson and Leigh Bowden to make the decision to stand for Local Government elections. Cr Leigh Bowden, National ALGWA President, Mayor of Shell Harbour, Cr Marianne Saliba and Cr Penny Nicholson are pictured at the ALGWA Conference in 2019. Both Councillors have said their journey into Local Government has been rewarding and they have something to contribute to their communities. *Photo courtesy Ben Williams Photography.*



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Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

For further media information contact:
Maxine Imrie Media Officer 1300 459 689
Maxine.Imrie@cgrc.nsw.gov.au