

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: 26/10/23**

#### **Council to pursue demerger.**

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) held an extraordinary Council meeting on Wednesday 18 October 2023 to discuss options associated with the recent announcement made by Minister for Local Government, Hon Ron Hoenig MP, regarding the demerger of the Council and the reinstatement of the two former Cootamundra and Gundagai Shire Councils.

Effectively the Minister has put the ball back into Council's court, requesting Council present a case to him, that would show how the two councils would be financially viable if a demerger was to be granted.

Councillors had the opportunity to meet with the Minister on 3 October 2023, after months of attempting to get a meeting. The Minister made his announcement at this meeting and again at a scheduled press conference held directly after the meeting with Councillors.

All Councillors expressed their disappointment with the Ministers statement and reasoning regarding his decision not to proceed with the demerger under the current legislation.

Councillors requested the Interim General Manager Mr Steve McGrath to investigate options, legal channels, and financial issues, and present them with a detailed report outlining where Council will stand should it decide to pursue the demerger.

This report was presented at the extraordinary meeting. Councillors held a workshop prior to the meeting to work shop the options and discuss freely their questions.

CGRC mayor Cr Charlie Sheahan opened the meeting, and all listened to a Gundagai resident at the open forum state the view that in his opinion Gundagai residents remain committed to a demerger and the return of the Gundagai Shire as a standalone entity.

Cr Sheahan adjourned the meeting into a full committee which allowed all Councillors to comment on the four options put forward in the Interim General Managers report. Cr Sheahan then reopened the meeting and asked all councillors to vote on the option Council should pursue. A unanimous decision was in favour of option four.

Council will seek further legal advice through its Solicitors, including the engagement of senior counsel, to provide advice to Council to progress the demerger of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.

Council will engage Counsel House to undertake a campaign of advocacy and lobbying on behalf of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council in pursuit of the demerger of Council to form two new Councils, Cootamundra and Gundagai.

Council has resolved to prepare a detailed implementation plan which creates two sustainable councils in preparation for lodgement with the Minister for Local Government and the Local Government Boundaries Commission to pursue the demerger of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.

Council will allocate the sum of \$230,000 in its 2023/24 budget for demerger planning, such funding will reduce the projected operating surplus for the 2023/24 budget year.

Councillor Logan Collins also moved that Council seek meetings with the Shadow Minister for Local Government, Wendy Tuckerman and local MP Steph Cooke to discuss the implications of the NSW Government's new method for a demerger as a matter of urgency.

**-END-**

**Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council**  
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