

General Manager position

Following the recent interview with Mrs Leeah Daley the Council announced that Mrs. Daley has been appointed to the position of Acting General Manager for 12 months from 5 July 2025.

Gwydir Shire Council's long-servicing General Manager, Max Eastcott is retiring on 4 July 2025 after over 24 years of service with our Council and the former Bingara Shire Council. Max has been a wonderful asset to Gwydir Shire, and we have been very fortunate to have someone with such dedication and commitment at the helm.

Mrs Daley has been with Gwydir Shire Council and the former Yallaroi Council since 1987. During this time Leeah has worked in many different roles including Deputy General Manager and has acted in General Manager role over the last ten years when Max took leave. Gwydir Shire is lucky to have the option of not needing to rush into any final permanent replacement decision straight away.

At the last election towards the end of 2024 seven new Councillors were elected out of nine and this will allow these new Councillors especially to gain a greater insight into the organisation and its existing staff prior to making the important decision regarding a permanent appointment to the position of General Manager. We will also have the benefit of our new administration building being finished.

Council would like to thank the residents who responded to the Council's request to fill out the road survey. In the end Council received 175 surveys. The data from this survey will now be used to source grant funding.

The winners of the 2 x \$5,000 fuel vouchers were:

1. Tom Brennan
2. Michael Pearlman

The winners of 5 x \$100 IGA vouchers were:

1. Lee Ann Thompson
2. Rachele Cameron
3. Bob Coulton
4. Clinton Peachey
5. David Horne.

Congratulations to you all and again thank you to all respondents, we really appreciate your time and information.

Last Friday my fellow Councillors and I together with Engineering Services staff undertook a tour of some of the Shire's northern roads. This was very informative and allowed us to get to know the challenges which are faced by our residents, the incredible work our staff are doing, and to appreciate the role that the Self-Help program plays and to understand the vastness of our road network.



Councillors and Staff on the northern roads' tour

Telstra Services

Council is supporting a Gravesend community initiative. As the Mayor I recently attended a community meeting at Gravesend which discussed the lack of phone and internet services currently being provided by Telstra across the Shire.

From this meeting a petition was drafted. This petition is now available across the Shire at various venues.

The General Manager and I met with the Federal Member for New England, Mr Barnaby Joyce MP, and his staff on Wednesday and also discussed at great length our whole Shire's issue with mobile coverage and internet service. Mr Joyce promised he would escalate this matter further.

Other matters discussed concerned future road funding using the productivity data being produced as a result of the roads' survey mentioned previously.

The Living Classroom (TLC)

TLC has become a true community asset with many choosing to celebrate family events and happenings. It is also a hub for regional meetings.

The high voltage electricity installation works required for the new cabins have been delayed by the contractor due to staffing shortages. The new date for installation is now 2 April 2025.

TLC staff also welcomes anyone and everyone to feel free to pick olives from the trees onsite. This year's olives are very varied in size but there are plenty.

Council continues to collaborate with the Northern Slopes Landcare Association and its staff and volunteers in providing the community with a nursery which is open every Tuesday.

The Roxy Complex

Council was granted \$110,000 under the NSW Government Stronger Country Communities Funding Round 4 (SCCF - 4) Program to paint the façade of The Roxy Theatre. In addition, Council was granted \$365,000 under the NSW Government Community Local Infrastructure Recovery Package program to undertake stormwater mitigation works.

A new stormwater diversion and drainage system to be installed onsite will be completed by end of June 2025.

Council has been advised by the engineering company who inspected and then designed the stormwater diversion and drainage system that Council should defer the painting of the exterior of the building until at least 12 months after the system is fully operational to allow the whole complex to dry out and settle.

Bingara Riverfront Project

Soil Conservation Service staff are still on track to commence works during the month of March 2025.

Warialda Town Square

The Warialda Town Square is expected to be completed by the end of June 2025.

The proposed works includes an 8m x 4m structure which will be multipurpose. Throughout the year it will be a place of shade with furniture and then for events this furniture is removable, and the structure converts into a stage. This stage will enable live performances to be held onsite. So much so this year's Warialda Honey Festival will now be hosted at this venue. The Honey Festival will be held on Saturday 13 September 2025.

Bingara Office

Last week the New Administration Building Working Committee consisting of Council's Project Manager Colin Cuell, the appointed builders Shay Brennan Constructions, Struxi the design team, Councillors and I met for a progress meeting on the building. It is great to see things are progressing well, with all going to time and budget. We will continue to meet each month with progress reports.

Council's former Deputy Mayor, Mrs Catherine Egan, is the community representative on the Committee.

Onsite works completed to date include:

- Strip footings to approximately 25% of the site installed

- Concrete block wall adjacent to the Pally Styles building completed

- Underfloor sanitary drainage completed including connection to the sewer mains

- Existing building façade stripped back and stabilised

- Underground precast concrete stormwater detention tanks installed.

Offsite works also continue to progress with fabrication of the structural steelwork and construction of the concrete tilt panels. These will be fabricated and delivered to site for erection.

Day Care Services

Recently the Council was able to announce the commencement of Day Care services in both Bingara and Warialda. Operations began on Monday 3 March 2025.

Orientations are progressing smoothly, and we look forward to welcoming families to our newly approved facilities at the Bingara and Warialda Toy Libraries.

Service Details:

Bingara Toy Library: The Toy Library serves as a central hub for our Day Care services, providing a nurturing environment for children to learn and grow.

Warialda Toy Library: This facility offers a range of educational resources and activities designed to foster development and creativity among children.

Operating Hours:

Warialda: Monday, Tuesday and every second Wednesday - 8:00am to 4:00pm

Bingara: Thursday, Friday and every second Wednesday - 8:00am to 4:00pm

Tharawonga Mobile Resource Unit, managed by qualified Early Childhood educators, will oversee the Day Care services. The programs are tailored to children's interests and developmental stages, emphasizing learning through play and community values.

Warialda Water Supply

Following on from the meeting held on 11 February at Parliament House with Minister for Water Rose Jackson and MP Brendan Moylan the NSW Environment Protection Agency (EPA) has agreed to pay for the testing of private water bores in Warialda. The Minister is also prioritising our bore licence application. On behalf of my fellow Councillors, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Warialda High School Principal, Mrs Shelly Way's offer for Council to access the school's existing bore for the community's use. Council is now organising for this bore to be tested for quality and quantity.

Warialda library

Council is seeking feedback from residents on a proposal to possibly move the Warialda Library to the currently vacant Courthouse in Stephen Street. What do you think? Please send your ideas and thoughts to Council at mail@gwydir.nsw.gov.au.

Land valuations

At the beginning of the month, Councillors had an information session and general overview of land values for our local government area as at 1 July 2024. They provided a description of the land valuation system and explained how land values are determined. By now landowners would have received Notices and information from the NSW Government Valuer General. If you have queries you can visit www.nsw.gov.au/valuergeneral

Border Regional Organisation of Councils (BROC)

On Friday 14 February it was Gwydir Shire's turn to host the BROC Committee. Prior to the meeting we hosted drinks on sunset on the Gwydir River at Junction Park and formally welcomed everyone at dinner that night. Hosting was a great opportunity to show what Gwydir has to offer and to network with Mayors and General Managers.

We discussed issues affecting the region including crime, health, housing, education and tourism.

We had Michael Moran and Ian George from Telstra attend to give an update on their 5G network and service issues. On behalf of our community,

Bingara Orange Festival

This year's Orange Picking Ceremony will celebrate 65 years of the *Living Memorial*. The ceremony will be held on Friday 4 July 2025.

The following day will be the annual Orange Festival. The Special Events Committee members want to showcase our community's pride and active volunteering by hosting the biggest street parade yet. The Council encourages everyone to start planning your Float to display in the parade which will be at 2:00 pm.

MAYORAL MINUTE RECOMMENDATION

THAT the information be noted.