

# Warren Shire Highlights

Image credit: Steven Christian

## FEBRUARY 2024

**Warren Shire's Ordinary Council Meeting was held on Thursday 22 February 2024. Highlights from this meeting included:**

### **MAYORAL MINUTE – COST SHIFTING ONTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Mayor of Warren Shire, Councillor Milton Quigley, raised a Mayoral Minute to inform Council and the community of the level of cost shifting to local government being undertaken by the NSW State Government.

On average, it has been estimated that there is \$460.67 of cost shifting per ratepayer across the State. However, in relation to rural Councils, the average goes up to \$590.80 per ratepayer.

For Warren Shire, this equates to over \$1,148,000 per year and typically represents a fair amount of bitumen reseals, road pavement heavy patching, or road gravel re-sheeting.

Council will write to the NSW Premier, the NSW Treasurer and the NSW Minister for Local Government seeking that they urgently address these costs through a combination of regulatory reform, budgetary provisions, and appropriate funding.

Council will also provide information to the Local Member for Barwon, Roy Butler MP, on the [NSW Local Government \(LGNSW\) Cost Shifting Report 2021/22](#) and request he support the LGNSW Campaign on the issue.

A copy of the Report will be placed on Council's website to enable broad community access.

### **CLOSED COUNCIL – TENDER AWARDED FOR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF MARTHAGUY (TENANDRA) AND NEWE PARK (MERRIGAL) BRIDGES**

Warren Shire Council has accepted a tender from [Murray Constructions Pty Ltd](#) for the Design and Construction of Marthaguy (Tenandra) and Newe Park (Merrigal) Bridges, to the value of \$3,281,542.00 (inc GST), subject to a positive financial assessment being conducted.

The works are funded by \$3,883,200 from the Commonwealth Government's Bridges Renewal Program, and \$1,126,800 from the NSW Government's Fixing Country Roads Program Round 6.

### **POLICIES ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION – COUNCILLOR EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY**

The reviewed Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy incorporating minor amendments will now be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days.

Subject to no adverse submissions being received, the amended Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy will be adopted and commence on 1 July 2024.

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## **REGIONAL DROUGHT RESILIENCE PLANNING WORKSHOPS**

On Wednesday 14 February 2024, Warren Shire hosted two successful workshops as part of the Regional Drought Resilience Project Plan, provided by the Far Northwest Joint Organisation of Councils.

The workshops were well attended, with the local knowledge and innovative ideas shared helping to design new ways to stem the impact of future drought on our region.

The NSW Model for Regional Drought Resilience Planning involves neighbouring Councils working together to develop Regional Drought Resilience Plans, taking learnings from previous droughts and planning for future droughts.

The planning process gives a voice to local farmers, communities and industries to develop a plan with localised, realistic, and achievable actions to prepare for drought.

Find out more on [Council's website](#).

## **DESTINATION MACQUARIE MARSHES**

To progress the development of a detailed Destination Macquarie Marshes Strategy and Action Plan, workshops of the Destination Macquarie Marshes Taskforce are scheduled to commence on 13 March 2024.

Workshops will be facilitated by the Economic Development and Visitation Manager, with the aim of creating an updated Action Plan for review and adoption, prior to inviting new membership to the Destination Macquarie Marshes Taskforce.

The Strategy and Action Plan is anticipated to be completed by May 2024.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPLICATION – DISPENSING WITH BI-ELECTION FOLLOWING PASSING OF COUNCILLOR RONALD HIGGINS**

Warren Shire Council has successfully made an application to the Minister for Local Government requesting an order to not fill the vacancy created by the passing of Councillor Ronald Higgins.

Council will retain 11 Councillors until the next local government election, which is scheduled for 14 September 2024.

The decision from the Minister's Delegate means that Council will dispense with the need to conduct a bi-election to fill this casual vacancy, avoiding an unnecessary burden for ratepayers.

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## PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT 2024/2025 ESTIMATES

Warren Shire Council has endorsed a proposed 4.5% increase in general rates, as determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), for the purposes of preparing its Draft 2024/2025 Budget Estimates.

The rate peg for 2024/2025 has taken into account various aspects of financial impacts upon local government areas, with rising costs in service delivery anticipated.

The Draft 2024/2025 Operational Plan and Estimates will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days, following its initial consideration by Council in April 2024.

## GRANT APPLICATIONS

Warren Shire Council is currently awaiting notification on the following grant applications submitted to the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund Program 2023/24:

- \$825,000 to enable a racecourse irrigation upgrade to enhance sustainability by delivering water efficiency to optimise value and community enjoyment. This upgrade will also enhance Council's ability to work towards environmentally sustainable practices and eliminate manual handling issues for staff during watering activities.
- \$96,636 to enable a compliant, accessible concourse within the Showground / Racecourse complex. Currently, the GBS Falkiner Lounge and Grandstand area does not have adequate disability access.
- \$361,364 to improve perimeter fencing around the Showground / Racecourse Complex encompassing the Racecourse, Showground, Equestrian Arena, Pony Club and Country Horse Jump facilities. This aims to provide superior protection against potential kangaroo intrusion, thereby improving safety at the facility.

## ON THE ROADS – FEBRUARY 2024

Major flood restoration work is currently underway on SR7516 Billybingbone, SR36 Gibson Way, SR16 Notts Lane, and SR17 Lamps Road. Heavy patching work is in progress on SH11 Oxley Highway.

To date, 20 patches out of 52 have been completed on Oxley Highway. The final scope of work for Nevertire-Bogan Road has been concluded, entailing the repair of several damaged culverts, tree trimming and the rehabilitation of road infrastructure.

Pothole repairs have been conducted on RR202 Marthaguy Road, RR347 Collie-Trangie Road, RR333 Carinda Road and SH11 Oxley Highway.

Slashing operations have been completed on SH11 Oxley Highway, SR66 Wambianna Road, and RR347 Collie-Trangie Road.

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Routine safety inspections by RMCC, including guideposts and slashing, are scheduled for Regional Roads and the Oxley Highway. Additionally, a new traffic counter will be installed on Buckingham Road (SR-5). The inspection program for both regional and local roads is currently underway.

## CAPITAL WORKS IN PROGRESS

Major works are progressing on the [Carter Oval Youth Sports Precinct](#), [Warren Showground / Racecourse Upgrade](#) and [Warren Airport Upgrade](#), with all works scheduled for completion in early 2024.

Current project and other works updates include:

- Foundation work for the new terminal building, as part of the **Warren Airport upgrade**, recommenced this month. It is anticipated that the terminal building and other related works will be completed by May 2024.
- The lobby upgrade for **Warren Shire Library** has been completed, with an opening held for the improved facility on 6 February 2024. Feedback from the public on the improvements made to the library has been extremely positive, with members pleased to have the library back in full service. The upgrade also included landscaping works, which are anticipated for completion by early March 2024.
- Installation of an irrigation storage tank at Bore Flat, to improve irrigation of **Carter Oval Youth Sports Precinct** and minimise interference with the Warren River water supply, occurred on 2 February 2024. Further works in regard to pumping and control will be undertaken in March 2024.
- A project to upgrade the **oval lighting at Victoria Park** will commence in early March 2024, and includes removal of the metal halide lights, which are more than 20 years old, and replacement with state-of-the-art, dark sky compliant LED fittings.
- Upgrades to the **Warren War Memorial Swimming Pool Amenities and Facilities** are underway. The final rescope design specifications and works program was agreed to at the Sporting Facilities Committee Meeting held 7 February 2024, which was followed by the first site meeting with the contractor on 8 February 2024. It is anticipated onsite upgrade works will commence at the end of March 2024.
- **Levee Refurbishments** are currently underway, with work progressing on two stages of the project: civil works and final design of construction works. In addition, the replacement of 44 floodgates and safety upgrades to all floodgate pits has been put to tender, closing early April 2024.

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## COMMITTEE NEWS

- The **Ewenmar Waste Depot Committee** has recommended that Council provide a community survey to determine residents' interest and capacity to pay for a recycling service. More information and the final survey will be available shortly for community feedback.

The Committee further reported that the transfer station will be delayed until at least April 2024, due to not being able to source a contractor for the works and the unavailability of Council staff due to the large road maintenance program.

- The **Economic Development & Promotions Committee** recommended that Council convene with representatives from the NSW Police to discuss crime statistics within the Shire, seek a determination of the nature of the crimes reported, and discuss possible solutions and actions.

A relevant meeting with the NSW Police was held on Wednesday 21 February 2024.

The Committee has further recommended that historical photographs be made available to the Visitor Information Centre for display to the public.

- **Council's MANEX Committee** heard an update on the flood and storm damage claims that have been submitted, and associated works that have been undertaken.

In addition, MANEX recommended that Council adopt the Garbage Services Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Sub Plan and Garbage Depot Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Sub Plan.

- The **Warren Local Emergency Management Committee** endorsed the Pre-Event Recovery Plan presented to its February meeting. Discussions were also held regarding designated holding grounds for stock in the event of a transport accident.

The Committee recognised Warren's NSW Fire and Rescue Brigade, which is celebrating 140 years of service.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday 2 March 2024: Annual Carp Muster.
- Sunday 3 March 2024: Clean Up Australia Day.
- Sunday 24 March 2024: Warren Triathlon.
- Thursday 28 March 2024: Next Ordinary Council Meeting.

See a full list of upcoming events in Warren Shire on [Council's website](#).

-ENDS-

A banner image showing a sunset over a field with rows of crops. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange and red glow. The sky is blue with some clouds. A blue rectangular box is overlaid on the top part of the image, containing the text 'Warren Shire Highlights' in white.

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