

Media Release

Central Darling Shire to have first Council in 12 years

Friday, 31 October 2025

The people of Central Darling Shire have their first Council in 12 years, with the Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig today confirming the three people to serve as appointed councillors alongside the councillors elected by the community.

The new Rural and Remote Council model will enable the Council to draw on a wide range of expertise to ensure that it can address the challenges of service provision in a remote location.

Central Darling will have an equal mix of elected and appointed councillors to ensure strong local representation while maintaining stable governance.

This new model was introduced by the Minns Labor Government to address the unique challenges of larger remote councils and to provide a pathway back to democratic representation for Central Darling Shire after 12 years of administration.

Following the election for the Council's three wards, Peter Sullivan was elected to Ward A, Max Bradley to Ward B, and Daniel Fusi was declared elected uncontested in Ward C.

The three appointed councillors were determined by the Minister after the election results were declared, to ensure their skills and experience will complement those of the elected councillors.

The appointed councillors are:

- **Robert (Bob) Stewart** – Mr Stewart has served as the Administrator of Central Darling Shire Council since 2019, conducting day to day business during this challenging time which has included fish kills, drought, and floods. Bob has over 40 years of local government experience and understands the specific financial, socioeconomic and environmental challenges for the region.
- **Fiona Kelly** – Ms Kelly is a proud Barkindji/Ngiyampaa woman and Executive Principal of Menindee Central School which she also attended as a student. Ms Kelly has dedicated herself to culture and community, and her leadership at Menindee Central has seen a number of positive changes.
- **The Hon. Barbara Perry** – Ms Perry is a former Auburn Councillor, served 13 years in NSW Parliament as the Member for Auburn and served in several Ministerial roles including Minister for Local Government from 2008-2011. She has a legal background and has significant experience in governance and interaction with the State government.

Bob Stewart has been named as the Chairperson for the new Central Darling Shire Council and will continue to provide strategic direction for the Council. The Council can elect a Deputy Chair at its first meeting in December.

All councillors will undergo an induction program to ensure they are ready and equipped to serve the people of Central Darling effectively.

The NSW Government is also providing \$6 million in funding to support the Council's financial stability as it transitions out of administration. This funding, with the agreed program of expenditure, will help the Council address immediate infrastructure priorities, build capacity and deliver local government services across the Shire.

Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig said:

"Returning democratic representation to Central Darling Shire after 12 years under administration was a key priority for the Minns Labor Government and I'm very proud that we've reached this point.

"I congratulate both the elected and appointed councillors of Central Darling Shire and I wish them well in their new roles serving this community.

"Central Darling Shire faces unique challenges. The government will continue to work closely with the Council to ensure it has the support it needs.

"I expect all councillors to work together to serve the community, and I look forward to seeing them get down to the business of running the Council."

Member for Barwon Roy Butler said:

"This is an important day for the communities of Central Darling Shire and means the Council can finally get on with the job. After over a decade in administration this will be just the first step toward the post-administration era.

"The Rural and Remote model, consisting of a mixture of elected and appointed members, was developed in consultation with me and many other local stakeholders to get Central Darling back on the path of having an elected local government. There is scope for changing that model after it gets up and running.

"We want to see all our new councillors succeed, and I look forward to working together with them to deliver for the people of Central Darling."

MEDIA:

Clare Dowswell | Minister Hoenig | 0448 540 073

Troy Lennon | Roy Butler MP | 0447 381 148