



CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE COUNCIL

5 May 2025

Urgent Action Needed on Police Numbers

The Central Darling Shire Council General Manager, Greg Hill, has written to the Member of Barwon, Roy Butler, raising concerns about permanent police numbers in the Shire.

- Ivanhoe Police Station is unattended, with both officer positions currently in the recruitment process. As a result, the Ivanhoe community is serviced by the Balranald Police Station, which is located approximately 200 kilometres away.
- Menindee Police Station has only one sergeant. Two vacant police officer positions are yet to be filled.
- Wilcannia Police Station is staffed by eleven officers; however, key senior positions including inspector, sergeant, and several constables are vacant and undergoing recruitment. Leaving approximately four officers in Wilcannia.

Over many years the Central Darling Shire and our communities have worked hard to build a reputation for our towns being safe and secure. In recent years we have been seeing the results of this. Over the past few years, Council has successfully recruited new staff from outside the Shire to fill areas where there is a skills shortage. This current situation with a drastic lack of police puts all that hard work in jeopardy with the potential to impact Council's ability to recruit and maintain staff. It also could impact our tourism numbers. Our Shire relies on tourism as an important economic driver, and it is vital to our economy.

The ongoing shortages of police officers in Far West NSW, coupled with the high number of vacancies, mean that recruitment efforts are merely maintaining current staffing levels rather than addressing the backlog of unfilled positions. Furthermore, the existing workload pressures, including extensive overtime demands, are affecting police morale and increasing fatigue, which could further exacerbate staff shortages.

Over the past twelve months, the Council Administrator and General Manager have attended Country Mayors' meetings at Parliament House, where they heard a presentation from the NSW Deputy Commissioner of Police on new initiatives aimed at attracting officers to regional areas. However, it has become increasingly clear that these initiatives are not effectively addressing the challenges in Central Darling. New recruits are overwhelmingly drawn to Sydney and more affluent regional areas, where lifestyle and social opportunities far outweigh any promotional or financial incentives to relocate to the Far West.

Council is calling for the situation to be urgently addressed and appreciates Mr Butler's support with this important issue in bringing it to the government's attention.

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