

Mayoral Minute

ITEM 1	NSW Electoral Commission Redistribution
MEETING	Ordinary Meeting – 15 July 2020
DIRECTORATE	Elected Members
AUTHOR	Mayor
POLICY	Nil
LEGAL	Nil
FINANCIAL	Nil
STRATEGIC LINK	
ATTACHMENTS	

MAYORAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council make submission to the NSW Electoral Commission that the Gunnedah Local Government Area remain in the State electorate of Tamworth.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's endorsement to make a submission to the NSW Electoral Commission on Council's position with regards to Gunnedah Shire Council being redistributed to the Barwon electorate.

BACKGROUND

Council has been made aware that the NSW Electoral Commission has received a number of proposals that would see Gunnedah Shire Council moved from the Tamworth electorate into Barwon electorate.

COMMENTARY

The Tamworth electorate covers a wide local government area including Tamworth Regional Council, Gunnedah Shire, Walcha Shire and a small part of the Liverpool Plains Shire. It is made up of approximately 22,000 km².

The Shire of Gunnedah is serviced by The Hunter New England Health Region and the Tamworth Base Hospital is our nearest large medical centre.

Gunnedah residents and businesses rely on daily air services to access major capital cities such as Sydney and Brisbane via the Tamworth Airport located 45 minutes drive from the centre of Gunnedah.

Police services for the Gunnedah Local Government area fall under the Oxley District Command and its headquarters are based in the centre of Tamworth.

Gunnedah Shire is a member of Namoi Unlimited - a Joint Organisation of Councils working together in partnership across the Namoi region. Namoi Unlimited was established in 2015 as part of the NSW Government's pilot program for new entities, called Join Organisations, to facilitate collaboration among neighbouring Councils. Councils include Gunnedah Shire Council, Gwydir Shire Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council Walcha Council and Tamworth Regional Council.

Local Government areas that Gunnedah Shire Council work in close collaboration to achieve regional outcomes are four of the five members of Namoi Unlimited are in the make up of the State electorate of Tamworth. These are:

- Gunnedah Shire Council;
- Tamworth Regional Council;
- Walcha Shire Council; and
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council.

Namoi Unlimited enables Council's to collaborate, plan, set priorities and deliver important projects in regional NSW. Namoi Unlimited has developed a Strategic Regional Plan (Namoi Unlimited, 2018a) focused on four, interlinked, Strategic Regional Priorities that go across Members LGA borders. These are:

- Water for the Future;
- Namoi Roads Strategy;
- Engaged People Seeing Skills for the Future;
- Namoi Economic Supply Chain Strategy (currently in development).

Geographically, Barwon electorate covers an area of 356,000km². It covers approximately 44% of the land mass of NSW. Including the Gunnedah Shire into the Barwon electorate will add more complexity for the Sitting Member to have regular face to face meetings and visit the Gunnedah Shire due to the distance required to travel and therefore, make it difficult to represent the needs of the Gunnedah Community. By adding the Gunnedah Shire to the Barwon electorate, it will result in the electorate being made up of 15 Local Government Areas.

Councillor J Chaffey
MAYOR