

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Thursday, 7 March 2024

## **STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR RE-APPOINTED**

Mr Peter Stephenson has been re-appointed as Strathbogie Shire Council administrator until the October local elections, to ensure continuity of leadership, functions and duties of the council.

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Strathbogie Shire Council was suspended on 6 December 2023 for the remainder of its term of office, and Mr Stephenson was appointed interim administrator until 6 March 2024.

These measures were in response to the final report from Mr Stephenson in his capacity as municipal monitor on the Council's inability to resolve governance issues. These issues were identified by the previous monitor, Janet Dore, over a 12-month appointment made at the request of the Council.

The final report concluded that the Council was unable to address the conduct and governance issues identified during Mr Stephenson's appointment as monitor and by the previous monitor, Janet Dore. Mr Stephenson recommended further intervention to ensure good governance at the Council.

Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne recommended the suspension of the councillors following consideration of responses from the Council and councillors to the monitor's report, which indicated that the Council had failed to identify and take steps to remedy its failure to provide good governance.

The Allan Labor Government is supporting and improving council accountability, governance and culture across the state through reforms to the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Government will introduce new legislation before the local government elections in October 2024 to elevate governance and integrity standards in Victoria's 79 councils, encouraging quality candidates to put themselves forward.

Reforms will introduce mandatory training for elected representatives, a uniform councillor code of conduct and strengthened powers for the Minister to address councillor conduct.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne**

*"Residents of Strathbogie deserve a council that serves their needs. The Administrator will continue to provide good governance to council until the election in October 2024."*