

**Holding a Constitutional Referendum in Conjunction With the  
2008 Local Government Election – Cases For & Against**

**VOTING IS COMPULSORY**

Cabonne Shire Council covers an area of approximately 6,108 square kilometres and is home to approximately 12,940 residents.

The Shire is presently divided into six Wards being Belubula, Nangar, Canobolas, Ophir, Yuranigh and Goobang. Two Councillors are elected from each of those Wards to form the twelve person governing body of the Council. The voting system used to elect Councillors under this Ward structure is known as the Optional Preferential. Each year the Councillors elect the Mayor from within their number.

Council has recently resolved that it will hold a Constitutional Referendum in conjunction with the 2008 Council election to deal with the issues of reduction in the number of Councillors from twelve to nine; and/or abolition of wards.

Council believes that public input into these issues is vital.

**REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS**

On 13 September 2008 you will be asked:

*DO YOU FAVOUR REDUCING COUNCILLOR NUMBERS FROM TWELVE  
(12) TO NINE (9)?*

*YES/NO*

YOU MUST VOTE **YES**, IF YOU SUPPORT, OR **NO** IF YOU OPPOSE

Under Section 224 of the Local Government Act, a Council must have at least five and not more than 15 Councillors. Currently Cabonne Council has twelve Councillors (with the Mayor elected from within that number) The Councillors represent the approximately 12,940 residents of the Shire.

The cases For and Against reducing the number of Councillors are:

**For**

- Can result in more efficient decision making as the more Councillors there are, the more difficult it can be to reach a decision
- Greater numbers on Council can mean that non-committed or uninvolved elected representatives “fly under the radar”
- There would be a reduction in costs associated with Councillor fees and allowances
- It may be easier for Council to work as a unified team due to decreased team numbers
- Quality of representation is the important issue not the number of Councillors

**Against**

- Reduction in effective representation as there would be less Councillors representing the people of the Shire
- May result in smaller population centres being less represented
- Decreases the number of Councillor representatives that can represent the community on Council’s committees
- Less Councillors means less ideas and debate and possible uninformed decisions
- The individual workload of Councillors would increase as the total workload would be shared among a larger number of people
- The current number of Councillors has been working effectively for many years

## **ABOLITION OF WARDS**

On 13 September 2008 you will be asked:

**DO YOU FAVOUR CABONNE COUNCIL ABOLISHING WARDS WHERE ALL ELECTORS WOULD VOTE FOR ALL COUNCILLORS?**  
YES/NO

YOU MUST VOTE **YES**, IF YOU SUPPORT, OR **NO** IF YOU OPPOSE

A Council may or may not have wards. If it does have wards then the number of Councillors to be elected from each ward must be the same. Also, the boundaries of the wards must be kept under review such that the number of electors in each ward does not vary by more than 10%.

Council currently has six (6) wards with two (2) Councillors elected from each. If the proposal to reduce the number of councillors is carried, the number of wards will need to be reduced to three (3) regardless.

The cases For and Against the abolition of wards are:

### **For**

- All Councillors represent all ratepayers
- Councillors may have a more strategic approach
- Councillors may think more broadly about issues
- Councillors will be less likely to be accused of bias to a particular area
- There would be no ward boundary confusion issues i.e. where the boundary should be or when the boundary needs to be moved to ensure an equality of voters in each ward
- Ward boundaries are becoming distorted and failing to reflect communities of interest
- No confusion in relation to Ward Boundaries or Ward Boundary changes

### **Against**

- Councillors may not have a local focus/community of interest
- Councillors may be identified with a particular area of the Shire
- Councillors may have a more intimate knowledge of a particular issue
- Ratepayers may perceive that there isn't a personalised service approach
- Perceived loss of local area representation
- Higher cost for by-elections because all electors would be required to vote as opposed to a single ward.

*If both referendum questions result in a no vote then there will be no change to the current ward or councillor structure for Cabonne Council, subject to the decisions of future Councils.*

*If the proposal to reduce Councillor numbers results in a yes vote then the number of councillors will be reduced from 12 to 9 commencing from the 2012 local government election.*

*If the proposal to abolish wards results in a yes vote then there will be no wards within Cabonne Shire commencing from the 2012 local government election.*

*If the proposal to reduce the number of councillors results in a yes vote but the proposal to abolish wards results in a no vote then the number of wards will need to be reduced to 3.*

*If the proposal to reduce Councillor numbers results in a no vote but the proposal to abolish wards results in a yes vote then Councillor numbers will remain at 12 but there will be no ward structure commencing from 2012 local government election.*