



# COMMUNITY COMMITTEES



## Are Community Committees a good thing or a bad thing?

Councillor Joanne McRae has proposed a Notice of Motion for the Orange City Council meeting on Tuesday 22nd October requesting information about Councillor training; Councillor attendance records for various meetings and the timely completion of Declarations of Interest documentation. One of the issues is about Councillor attendance at Community Committee meetings.

**Orange City Council** has more than 20 Community Committees, which meet at a variety of intervals including quarterly, bi-monthly or when required. Council's website explains their purpose:

'Council wants to hear from community members who are interested in serving on a Community Committee. There are currently more than twenty community committees. These small groups provide a source of information and discussion to feed into the decision-making of Orange City Council.'

**Blayney Shire Council** has 9 'Section 355 Committees' through which a Committee

of Council exercises its functions on Council's behalf.

1. Access Advisory Committee
2. Audit and Risk Management Committee
3. Australia Day Committee
4. Financial Assistance Program Advisory Committee
5. Sports Council
6. Cemetery Forum
7. Blayney Shire Tourism, Town and Villages Committee
8. Cultural Centre Working Group
9. Blayney Shire Floodplain Management Committee

I have searched **Cabonne Council's** website and it appears to have 3 community committees: Australia Day Awards; Heritage Working Party and Tourism Advisory Committee.

I worked at a relatively small Council in Sydney (which will remain nameless) that had some 53 community committees meeting on a monthly basis. I was asked to undertake a review. In my report to

Council I concluded that the number of committees and the frequency of their meetings was creating a large burden for the staff in preparing agendas and minutes and attending meetings, and the benefits of having many of these committees was outweighed by the cost of the resources being used in servicing them. There was a somewhat cynical view that the purpose of the Committees was to keep the Councillors busy and away from important matters, but that may have been a 'Yes, Minister' type of conspiracy theory!

The Terms of Reference were not consistent between the Committees and some of the committee members did not understand their role or comply with the Code of Conduct as they were directing Council staff, which is not allowed.

The Council decided to standardise the Terms of Reference, train Committee members in their obligations, and reduce the number of Community (S355) Committees to 17 meeting quarterly. Orange City Council's Community

Strategic Plan includes the following objective and strategies.

### Objective 14: An informed community

**14.1.** Deliver communication that is open, accessible, meaningful and regular across a range of media

**14.2.** Promote organisational culture that delivers excellent customer service and continuous improvement

**14.3. Provide opportunities for widespread and quality engagement, and where appropriate, shared decision making.**

I see from the Delivery Program and Operational Plan that it is the responsibility of the Manager of Community Governance to review the Community Committees each year, so will look out for the next review.

I would be interested to hear from community members of the committees as to whether they think that they fulfil their purpose of 'a source of information and discussion to feed into the decision-making of Orange City Council.'

I would love to receive feedback at [aes@amandaspaldingconsulting.com](mailto:aes@amandaspaldingconsulting.com)

BEST PROPERTIES — BEST AGENTS — ACROSS THE REGION

# ORANGE

PROPERTY MARKET

peterfisher

BLOWESREAL ESTATE  
WORKING FOR YOU SINCE 1972

ORANGE REAL ESTATE

LJ Hooker

MCC MCCARRON CULLINANE

Townsend  
REAL ESTATE

MRE  
Molong real estate

JOHN COOK  
REAL ESTATE

WILLIAMS MACHIN REAL ESTATE

Chris Grylls Real Estate  
111 SUMNER STREET ORANGE NSW 2890 PH 0282 5891 [www.chrisgryllsrealestate.com.au](http://www.chrisgryllsrealestate.com.au)

mccormackbarber  
real estate

List your property for sale with one of these agents!

Why? Because more people pick up and read Orange City Life than any other local publication.

ORANGECITY  
**Life**