



Local Government Elections 2021 Candidate information pack





ABOUT EDWARD RIVER COUNCIL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Edward River Council was formed in 2016 after the merger of Deniliquin Council and Conargo Shire. The municipality comprises the township of Deniliquin and the six rural villages of Blighty, Mayrung, Conargo, Wanganella, Pretty Pine and Boooroban. Our Council area covers a total of 8,881 square kilometres and boasts productive agricultural land and beautiful natural assets.

After experiencing population decline from 10,156 in 2001, rebased estimates from the 2016 census indicate the resident population within Edward River has increased from 8,888 in 2011 to 8,951 in 2016.

Deniliquin and the villages of the Edward River region are great places to live and visit, with a sustainable future. The community is resilient, and the local economy is strong. People choose to live here because it offers a great range of services and opportunities for a country town.

Indigenous connection to Country is acknowledged and enriches the cultural and economic life of Edward River. Newcomers are warmly welcomed, and their contribution is appreciated.

The town centre is easy to navigate, park, walk, ride a bike in. Local businesses are celebrated and supported to grow and prosper, and the opportunities for businesses to start up or move to Edward River are well communicated. The region is actively growing and there is a diverse economy of agriculture, industry, commercial, retail and tourism.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Edward River Council

- No. Employees – 117 (Women – 28%, Men – 72%)
- No of services we provide to the community - 30
- Annual budget 2021 - \$34.43M revenue, \$28.95M capital works spend and an operating surplus of \$5.95M
- Km of roads – 1598.76km
- No. Rateable properties - 5018

Edward River area info

- Geographic area – 888,344.6ha or 8,881 sq km
- Population - 9084
- Average household size – 2.3
- Median Age – 43.8
- Population born overseas - 568
- Population growth – 1.01%
- Avg summer and winter temperatures – Summer 31, Winter - 15
- Median house price - \$238,000
- Size of labour force – 3916 employed over the age of 15



GROWING TOURISM AND ATTRACTING VISITORS

- On average more than 185,000 people visit the Edward River region each year.
- Visitors to the Edward River region spend an average of \$49M per annum
- The Edward River region has 329 full-time tourism jobs.

We are the centre of the Southern Riverina. Home to a connected and engaged community, driven by a diverse economy. We work together to lead our community, achieve our potential and embrace our future.

OUR COUNCIL

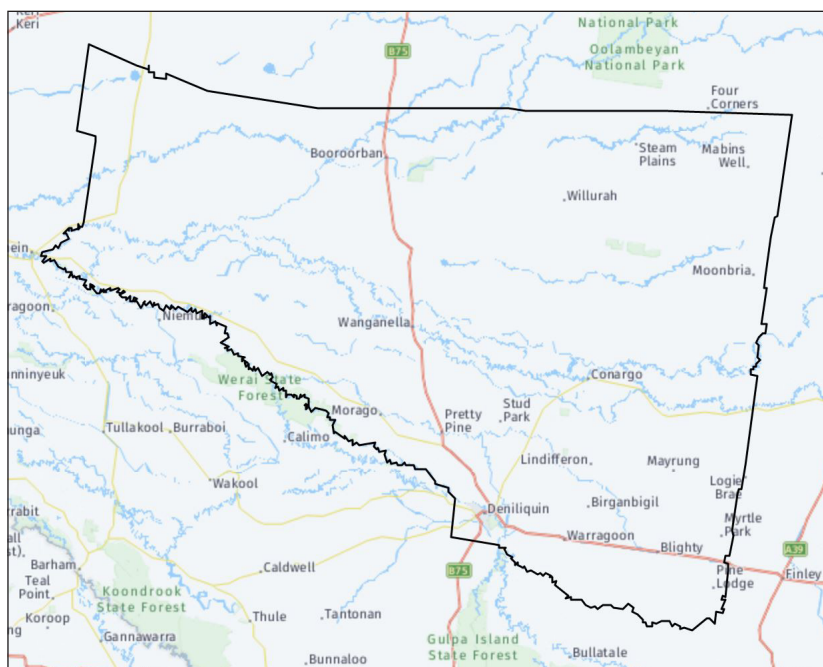
OUR VISION

Edward River is the centre of the Southern Riverina. Home to a connected and engaged community, driven by a diverse economy. We work together to lead our community, achieve our potential and embrace our future.

Edward River Council was proclaimed on 12 May 2016, following the amalgamation of the former Conargo Shire Council and Deniliquin Council into one strong, cohesive and dynamic organisation.

Between May 2016 and September 2017, Council was led by a NSW Government-appointed Administrator who was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new Edward River Council.

This administration period formally ended on Thursday, 21 September 2017 after Councillors elected at the Saturday, 9 September 2017 poll were sworn in.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC PROFILES

Edward River Council's community profile can be found at <https://profile.id.com.au/edward-river>

Edward River Council's economic profile can be found at <http://economy.id.com.au/edward-river>

WHAT ATTRIBUTES ARE NEEDED TO BECOME A COUNCILLOR



Being ethical, open and honest are key characteristics of successful councillors. In addition, you'll need:

- to be keen to learn;
- communication skills to talk to people in your community and consider different views;
- time management and organisational skills;
- problem solving skills; and
- teamwork skills.

It's important to talk to your family and friends about whether you can realistically fit being a councillor into your life, along with any other work and personal priorities.

You'll need the time to read council business papers, attend meetings, represent council on committees and represent the council at some events.

To get a feel for what a councillor does, you might like attend a council meeting before the election, talk to a past councillor or people in your community about local issues. If you're elected, you'll receive support to understand your role and be successful. Both council and the NSW Government will provide an annual training and development program for you. Council will also provide an initial induction program.

Council will meet some expenses and provide other tools to help you carry out your role. Expenses can include training, conferences, travel, telephone and care for dependants such as children. Other tools will include an iPad to use on council business. Councils can also provide support to help councillors who have a disability or other special needs. Councillors also receive an annual fee from the council based on a fee range set each year by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.

A Councillor Handbook has been prepared by the Office of Local Government, in conjunction with Local Government NSW as a guide to becoming a councillor in NSW. The roles of the mayor, councillors and the CEO, their responsibilities and relationships are outlined in Section 2. This Handbook is a valuable resource.

OATH OR AFFIRMATION

Councillors (including mayors) are required to take an oath or affirmation of office. Oaths or affirmations of office must be taken by each councillor at or before the first meeting of the council after being elected.

Oath

I [name of councillor] swear that I will undertake the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of [name of council area] and the [name of council] and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Affirmation

I [name of councillor] solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will undertake the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of [name of council area] and the [name of council] and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

• Disclosures

Political donations and electoral expenditure must be disclosed to the NSWEC after each financial year.

The LGA requires a councillor or a designated person to complete and lodge with the general manager, a return disclosing his or her pecuniary interests. That return contains personal information about each councillor and designated person, including his or her name, address and signature, as well as information about property and shareholdings, gifts received, debts owed, other sources of income, and positions held in a trade union or business or professional organisation.

• Gifts

It is acknowledged that Council officials may at times be offered gifts, hospitality or benefits during the course of their duties; however, it is important to understand that the offering of such items may give the impression that Council has been unduly influenced in its decision making process, or is providing preferential treatment to individuals or organisations, giving rise to an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Council officials must avoid situations in which the appearance may be created that any person or organisation, through the provision of hospitality and other gifts or benefits of any kind, is securing or attempting to secure a favour from that Council official and Council.

Wherever possible, Council officials are encouraged not to accept gifts, hospitality or other benefits of any kind.

Council's Code of Conduct outlines the standards of conduct expected of all Council officials. This Policy aims to ensure that Council performs its public functions fairly and impartially in accordance with the Code.

• **Conflicts of Interest**

A conflict of interest occurs when the private interests of a public official come into conflict with their duty to act in the public interest. Conflicts of interest are particularly relevant where the public official has a decision-making role. The need to manage conflicts of interest is based on two propositions. One is that people in public positions must avoid situations in which private interests can affect their public duties. The other is that situations where there is the appearance of a conflict must also be avoided, if only because protestations of innocence and integrity may be impossible to judge.

Conflicts of interest are not wrong in themselves and can happen without anyone being at fault. However, it is vital that they are disclosed and managed effectively so that public officials perform their duties in a fair and unbiased way. Personal interests that can give rise to conflicts may be pecuniary, involving an actual or potential financial gain, or non-pecuniary without any financial element. In some circumstances the failure to disclose a conflict of interest in accordance with public sector policy may constitute corrupt conduct as defined in the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988.

Elected Member Structure

The Council is made up of nine (9) Councillors, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who are elected to the positions by the Council. The Mayor holds office for two years and the Deputy Mayor for wither 1 or 2 years as determined by the Council. The local government area is undivided and therefore has no wards.

Local Government Elections are held every four (4) years, with the next elections to be held in September 2025.

Council and Committees Meetings

Ordinary Meetings of Council are currently held on the fourth Thursday of the month, commencing at 9.00am, and attend a regular workshop briefing on the first Thursday of every month. The meeting agenda is distributed electronically on the Friday prior to the meeting day in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice. The council has the ability to alter the meeting day and start times after the election

Council also has a number of Section 355 and Advisory Committees which are responsible for reporting to Council on strategic and specialised matters. The Committee composition includes Councillors, community members and agency representatives.

Conduct of Elected Members

- Code of Conduct

All council officials are required to conduct themselves in accordance with standards of behaviour set out in the Model Code of Conduct.

Governance - Office of Local Government NSW

Council officials are expected to:

- conduct themselves in a manner that will not bring the council into disrepute
- act lawfully, honestly and exercise due care
- treat others with respect and not harass or discriminate against them, or support others who do so
- consider issues consistently, promptly and fairly
- ensure development decisions are properly made and deal fairly with all parties involved
- disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interests including, in the case of councillors, from reportable political donations
- use and secure information appropriately and not disclose confidential information
- use council resources ethically, effectively and efficiently.



Fees, Facilities and Expenses

- Mayor/Councillor Fees

The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal determines the annual maximum and minimum amount of fees to be paid to mayors and councillors for each category of council.

Edward River Council's indicative category is Rural and the applicable fees for 2020/21 were:

Category		Councillor/Member Annual Fee		Mayor/Chairperson Additional Fee*	
		Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
General Purpose Councils – Non-metropolitan	Rural	\$9,190	\$12,160	\$9,780	\$26,530
*This fee must be paid in addition to the fee paid to the Mayor/Chairperson as a Councillor/Member (section 249(2), <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>).					

The fee is payable monthly in arrears.

- Facilities and Expenses

The Local Government Act 1993 requires Council to adopt a policy that allows for Councillors to receive adequate and reasonable expenses and facilities to enable them to carry out their civic duties as elected representatives of their local communities.

Facilities will include a council email address <name>@edwardriver.nsw.gov.au, an iPad and mobile phone.

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework

In 2009 a new Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework for NSW local government was introduced. The IP&R framework requires councils to prepare a suite of long-term strategic documents, including a Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategy and Delivery Program, as well as an annual Operational Plan. Integration of these strategic documents is key to effective long-term planning and assist us in providing ratepayers with the best level of service we can.

Our current suite of documents can be found on our website: Integrated Planning and Reporting - www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au



Election Information

The New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC) has been engaged to conduct the election and the method of voting is proportional representation (similar to Senate voting) whereby a candidate gains a quota of the formal votes.

Prospective candidates and groups looking to contest the 2021 Election should familiarize themselves with the process for becoming a candidate at: Candidates & Groups | Local & State | NSW Electoral Commission - NSW Electoral Commission

To be eligible to stand for election you must:

- a) be at least 18 years old and an Australian citizen;
- b) live or own property in the council's area;
- c) be on the electoral roll for the council's area;
- d) not be disqualified from standing for office, for example, if you have committed certain offences.

RESOURCES

- Edward River Council website <https://www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au>
- Local Government NSW <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au>
Local Government NSW is the peak industry association that represents the interests of NSW councils.
- NSW Electoral Commission <https://www.elections.nsw.gov.au>
- NSW Local Government Act 1993 austlii.edu.au
- Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) <https://www.icac.nsw.gov.au>
- NSW Ombudsman <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au>
- Australian Local Government Association www.lgprofessionals.com.au