

Municipal Monitor's report and Minister's decision: administration

What are the role and responsibilities of an Administrator?

Administrators must perform all the functions, powers and duties of a Councillor of the Strathbogie Shire Council as set out in the Local Government Act.

What happens to the current Councillors?

Under the Local Government Act 2020, the Minister has the power to suspend a Council. The Minister has suspended the Councillors of Strathbogie Shire until the 2024 Council election. This means the suspended Councillors are no longer Councillors for the period of suspension and therefore do not receive an allowance.

What happens to the role of the Mayor?

Where an Administrator or, a panel of Administrators is appointed, the Chairperson of the panel of Administrators, must perform all the functions, powers and duties of the Mayor of the Strathbogie Shire Council.

What is the remuneration of the Administrators? Who pays for that?

An Administrator is entitled to payment and allowances and is employed on conditions set by the Minister. Remuneration and allowances will be paid by the Strathbogie Shire.

Normally when Administrators are appointed, people may end up losing their jobs or be made redundant as a result. Is that the case at Strathbogie?

Administrators appointed in this Local Government context is not the same as the role and responsibilities of Administrators appointed in the private sector. Administrators must perform all the functions, powers and duties of a Councillor of the Strathbogie Shire Council as set out in the Local

Government Act. Administrators essentially replace the role and responsibilities of Councillors.

Will Council services still operate as normal?

The Executive Leadership Team, under the direction and leadership of the CEO, remains responsible for the operations of the Strathbogie Shire and all staffing decisions. Services will continue to operate as is.

Strathbogie had a monitor in 2022. Why weren't the problems fixed then?

The first Municipal Monitor, Janet Dore, finished her nine-month appointment in July 2022 and her report was provided to Council in January 2023, and noted by Council at its February meeting (LINK). Ms Dore provided Council with invaluable learnings and support. She provided an extra layer of education for Council which, all but one, were first time Councillors.

When this report was noted by Council, the Mayor, Cr Laura Binks, wrote to the Minister asking for further help. In her letter she raised concerns that the learnings provided by Ms Dore were not being followed by all Councillors. She raised concerns about behaviour and providing a safe workplace for all.

It was following this the second Municipal Monitor, Peter Stephenson, was appointed. Mr Stephenson's appointment was very different. He reported to the Minister on the relationships between councillors and between councillors and Council staff, including councillor behaviour with respect to the Councillor Code of Conduct and processes for resolving disputes between councillors.

His full ToR can be found here:

<https://www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Fact-Sheet-Monitor-2-FAQs.pdf>

His report to the Minister can be found here:

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/council-governance/independent-reports>

Are there further investigations happening?

Investigations by the Local Government Inspectorate are confidential until the result is handed down.

How can I raise my concerns when my local Councillor no longer represents me?

Administrators must perform all the functions, powers and duties of a Councillor of the Strathbogie Shire Council, including representing the interests of our communities. Information on how to contact the administration will be made available soon.

You can also jump online at www.strathbogie.vic.gov.au to report an issue, such as problems with trees or roads, to leave feedback, or contact our Customer Service Centre between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday on 1800 065 993.

