



Warren Shire Council celebrates the retirement of long-serving councillors ahead of September elections

Warren Shire Council is preparing to bid farewell to several long-serving and dedicated Councillors ahead of the upcoming elections on 14 September 2024. Among those retiring are Mayor Milton Quigley, Councillor Kevin Taylor, Councillor Heather Druce, Councillor Katrina Walker, and the late Councillor Ron Higgins, who passed away earlier this year. Their collective service has been instrumental in shaping the direction and growth of Warren Shire over the past several decades.

Mayor Milton Quigley, who has served Warren Shire Council since 2004, is stepping down after 20 years of dedicated service, including six years as Mayor. Known for his steady leadership and commitment to the community, Mayor Quigley has been a guiding force through numerous challenges, including significant community infrastructure projects and navigating the aftermath of five disaster declarations.

Gary Woodman, General Manager of Warren Shire Council, praised Mayor Quigley's leadership, stating, "Milton's wise counsel has been invaluable to the Council, the community and myself. His ability to lead with a steady hand and provide clear direction during challenging times has earned him the respect and admiration of all those who have had the privilege to work with



him. His support has been crucial in helping us achieve significant milestones, and we are deeply grateful for his service."

"Twenty years ago, Milton Quigley joined Warren Shire Council as a Councillor, but his leadership journey began much earlier. From 1996 onwards, he served as the Chair of the Warren Sporting and Cultural Centre Building Committee. Milton was instrumental in securing the funding, designing, and ultimately overseeing the construction of this vital facility. Today, the Centre stands as a \$5 million asset to our community, but its value extends far beyond that figure. It's a testament to Milton's vision, determination, and his ability to magnify grant funds through relentless effort. He has remained deeply involved in its operations and management, proving time and again that he was the driving force behind bringing this project to fruition."

"Milton served for many years as Deputy Mayor under Rex Wilson, where he honed his diplomatic skills to an exceptional level. His ability to work quietly behind the scenes, armed with logic and calm determination, has allowed him to achieve significant progress in discussions with politicians. They often seek him out as a reasonable and collected individual to engage with. I've seen him work a room full of politicians better than anyone else, remembering names with ease and delivering information off the cuff with remarkable poise."

"During his time as Mayor, Milton's leadership was crucial in navigating Warren Shire through five disaster declarations, including floods, storms, and the severe drought from 2017 to 2020. His role



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as Deputy Chairperson of the Orana Joint Organization, now the Alliance of Western Councils, allowed him to provide strong direction and invaluable support to his fellow executives. However, his dedication to public service has come at a personal cost—being a dentist by profession, he sacrificed time away from his practice and his income to serve our community."

"Milton's medical background proved invaluable during the COVID-19 crisis, where he played a key role in ensuring Warren Shire achieved one of the highest vaccination rates in regional areas. His commitment to the community also extended to supporting local tradespeople and contractors during the drought, ensuring that our local economy didn't falter during challenging times. He is an active listener, always quick to address concerns, and his focus on securing grants has resulted in some of the most impressive infrastructure assets our community now enjoys."

"Under Milton's leadership, Warren Shire Council's committee structure has flourished, becoming more effective and supportive during his mayoral term. His time as Mayor required significant time away from his family and business, and we owe a debt of gratitude to his wife, Jenny Quigley, for her unwavering support throughout his tenure."

Councillor Kevin Taylor, who has been with Warren Shire Council for 25 years, is also retiring. Over the years, Councillor Taylor has played a key role in various committees, including the Airport Committee, the Town Improvement and Promotions Committee, the Traffic Committee, the Australia Day Committee, and the Warren Sporting Facilities Committee.

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Reflecting on his contributions, Mr. Woodman said, “Kevin Taylor’s 25 years of service is a testament to his commitment to the people of Warren Shire. I commend him on his leadership of the Airport Committee, the Town Improvement and Promotions Committee, the Traffic Committee, the Australia Day Committee, and the Liquor Accord. I have personally valued his input into the Sporting Facilities Committee. Beyond that, as a very public face of Council because of his visibility in business, Kevin has been instrumental in ensuring that residents’ concerns and problems were dealt with minimal delay by referring small problems or queries quickly to Council staff. We recognise Kevin’s wife Bernadine for her support.”

Councillor Heather Druce and Councillor Katrina Walker, both of whom have served two terms totaling eight years, have been instrumental in various initiatives that have improved the quality of life for Warren Shire residents.

Mr. Woodman expressed his gratitude to Councillor Druce, stating, “Councillor Druce, thank you for your work over several Committees during your two terms as a Councillor but in particular as Chair of the Showground Racecourse Committee, Chair of the Ewenmar Waste Depot Committee, and as a member of the Warren Health Action Committee. You should be proud of your achievement, and we thank your husband Jim for his support of you during this period.”

Similarly, he acknowledged Councillor Walker’s contributions, saying, “Councillor Walker, thank you for your work during your two terms as a Councillor, again on a number of Committees but



particularly in the Interagency space, in Health and in relation to the Ewenmar Waste Depot Committee. Your dedication to these areas has made a significant impact on our community. Similarly, we recognise your husband Tom for his support to you during your time on Council."

Councillor Ron Higgins, who passed away in January 2024, is also remembered for his nearly eight years of service. A dedicated public servant, previously a long term employee of Warren Shire Council, Councillor Higgins was deeply committed to the welfare of the community and made significant contributions to the Council during his tenure. Mr. Woodman paid tribute to him, saying, "I pay tribute to our late colleague Councillor Ron Higgins, for his advocacy in seeking the construction of a skate park and in his position as Chairman of the Water and Sewerage Committee. Ron's passing was a great loss to the Council and the community. His passion for public service and his contributions to our projects and initiatives will be remembered fondly. We thank Helen, his wife, for her support."

The final Council meeting of this term, held on 22 August 2024, was marked by an urgent and unanimous vote of thanks from the Councillors present to Mayor Quigley for his exemplary service. In a light-hearted moment, it was noted that throughout his tenure, Mayor Quigley conducted meetings with such composure that he "led us with a steady hand without touching the gavel".

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As these esteemed Councillors retire, Warren Shire Council looks ahead to the upcoming elections with a sense of gratitude for the years of service these individuals have dedicated to their community. Their legacies will undoubtedly continue to influence the direction of Warren Shire for years to come.

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