



Shire of Derby / West Kimberley

Shire Derby/West Kimberley Commissioner update #1 – Jeff Gooding PSM, JP

23 April 2025

Welcome to the first of what I intend to be regular updates.

I have been appointed as the Commissioner of the Shire of Derby West Kimberley (SDWK) and officially took up my role on Tuesday, 22 April 2025. My job is to act as the Council, to exercise all duties and functions ordinarily carried out by the President and Council members ensuring the continued proper functioning of Local Government in preparation for the return of a democratically elected Council in October 2025.

My appointment follows the resignation of five Council members, which meant that more than half of the elected positions became vacant. On Tuesday, 15 April 2025, the Governor declared the remaining four councillor positions as vacant which took effect from Friday, 18 April 2025, after it was published in the Government Gazette the day prior.

[https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/gazettestore.nsf/FileURL/gg2025_043.pdf/\\$FILE/Gg2025_043.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/gazettestore.nsf/FileURL/gg2025_043.pdf/$FILE/Gg2025_043.pdf?OpenElement)

I understand issues have contributed to the resignations of the former Council members, however, my role is not to inquire into those specific matters. That does not mean that I can't or won't seek to understand the background of decisions made. My strong focus however, will be on the future of what needs to be done for the Shire of Derby West Kimberley Council in the best possible place ready for the next Council elections.

I come to this role after a long Public Service career in the Kimberley, including a range of State Government roles such as establishing the Kimberley Development Commission as its long-term Chief Executive Officer of which I retired from in 2022. Currently, I hold a number of other positions including Director of the Wunan Foundation in the East Kimberley, and Trustee Director of Gumala Investments in the Pilbara and I volunteer work as a Justice of the Peace and am the Commander of the Marine Rescue unit in the East Kimberley.

I'm also a Shire Councillor with the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. Some people have asked whether my role as a Councillor on the Wyndham East Kimberley Shire creates a conflict with my Commissioner role. I have discussed this with both the Minister of Local Government and Department representatives, who indicate that there is no fundamental reason why the roles are not compatible, so long as I observe the conflict of interest provisions both Shires have. Of course, I commit to do this and be open and transparent in my duties. My view is there are some significant advantages that come from being in those roles and having familiarity with many of the issues we all face.

Derby

📞 (08) 9191 0999 | 30 Loch Street
✉️ sdwk@sdwk.wa.gov.au | PO Box 94, Derby WA 6728

Fitzroy Crossing

📞 (08) 9191 5355 | Flynn Drive
✉️ sdwk@sdwk.wa.gov.au | PO Box 101, Fitzroy Crossing



Shire of Derby / West Kimberley

My experience provides an extensive network of contacts that will be useful in my role as Commissioner for the SDWK. I am no stranger to Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and the remote communities of the West Kimberley. I've lived in this region for 46 years and have raised my family as proud Kimberley people. I have four adult daughters and six delightful grandchildren with another one expected soon. My wife and I have also developed a fruit farming enterprise in the Ord Irrigation area, so I have developed some small-business production skills.

I plan to regularly be in Derby, Fitzroy Crossing and the wider West Kimberley region and work closely with the SDWK administration and staff. Two days into the role and I'm pleased to have already met many of these people and quite a few key stakeholders and residents. I welcome the opportunity to meet with as many Community groups and individuals as I can. I've already started reaching out and for anyone wishing to catch up with me, please email me at:

commissioner@sdwk.wa.gov.au
or call the Shire office on 08 9191 0999

I anticipate Council meetings to go ahead as planned and will work to advise if there are changes that are required. The opportunity for questions will continue at Council meetings which are open to the public and I urge you to attend. Decisions still need to be made and the business of the Shire must continue for you, our community.

I will be looking at both the facts and the law, and will consider the merits of all that comes before me. An important point I would like to stress, is that I will act with the best of my ability in the interests of the whole community and Shire and always strive to be evidence and facts driven.

In the eyes of some in the community, I may not always 'get it all right', however I am committed to listen and understand shared context and act in the interests of current residents and for our generations to come.

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge and thank all former Council members for their service. My experience tells me that good and capable people put themselves forward for elections in Local Government to contribute to their community. Ideally there would be no need for a Commissioner to be appointed, but we mustn't let that detract from the contributions past Members have made or the efforts and support that has come from capable Shire staff.

Thank you all.

I look forward to working with all of the community of the Shire of Derby West Kimberley.

Jeff Gooding

Commissioner, Shire Derby/West Kimberley

Derby

📞 (08) 9191 0999 | 30 Loch Street
✉ sdwk@sdwk.wa.gov.au | PO Box 94, Derby WA 6728

Fitzroy Crossing

📞 (08) 9191 5355 | Flynn Drive
✉ sdwk@sdwk.wa.gov.au | PO Box 101, Fitzroy Crossing