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Warren in town to talk about merger

Gundagai Independent, Gundagai

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• Cont. from page 1

“If you look at the history of the amalgamation – we’ve had the sacking or resignation of the first general manager, the sacking or resignation of the first administrator, the scandal and subsequent dismissal of the second general manager. We’ve had clear evidence of job shifting when this was supposed to be saving jobs, increasing the number of jobs and shifting that from Gundagai over to Cootamundra, and then we start to look at a \$40M overrun. We’ve been lumbered with Cootamundra’s debt, and there has been no accountability and absolutely no transparency. What more do we need to show to get (the Government’s) attention? To me it seems pretty obvious. If I were running a business like this, I’d either be broke or I’d be in jail.

“This merger has gone from bad to worse and it is affecting business, it is affecting jobs and it is affecting confidence in the community – we need to put a stop to the whole thing.

“People move to Gundagai for a reason and this amalgamation has destroyed those reasons as to why people would want to actually come here.”

Dr Mara said he does not believe a review is required with a petition currently sitting with the Minister for

Local Government with over 1000 signatures in favour of a de-merger.

However, Mr Warren said the political and administrative arms all go off process and that process is a review.

“It would also be an opportunity for Gundagai to say, ‘here’s our numbers, here’s where we stand in 10 years, this is how we substantiate our point’,” Mr Warren said.

“If you read the Budget Estimates in the Hansard the Minister said (the mergers) have been a success. But the Honourable Mark Buttigieg asked if they’ve been so wonderful and such a success, why aren’t they doing more of them? Were they good or

were they not good? Did they work or did they not work?

“Long story short, they don’t want to concede that they were wrong. But it is an admirable thing whether it be a government, a business, a man or a woman – if you make a decision and it wasn’t the best one, you admit you probably should have done it differently and you try and fix it the best way you can.

“There’s nothing ever wrong with saying, ‘look, I could have done that better, that didn’t achieve what we wanted it to achieve, we’ll fix it’. Especially when it concerns communities and thousands of people.”



Shadow Minister for Local Government Greg Warren.