

Council learns about governance

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SIXTEEN Goondiwindi Regional Councillors and workers as well as Moree's Deputy Mayor went to a two-day workshop on how to work together.

It was held at the GTT Centre.

Legal requirements under the Queensland Local Government Act place certain burdens upon local councillors.

"There's a difference between 'management' and 'governance'" Facilitator and consultant Julie Garland McLellan said.

"Most councillors have experience in management, but many are unaware of the governance rules which are enforceable under the Act."

For instance, councillors cannot issue directions to council workers. "If they want someone to do something, they have to go through the council," she said.

"They can only act as a collective council, not as an individual."

Ms Garland McLellan said breaches of the act can lead to a councillor's dismissal. She knew of cases where entire councils had been dismissed and placed in the hands of administrators.

"It is extremely important to be on top of this issue, and I congratulate GRC for being among only the 3percent of Queensland councils to undergo training in this matter," she said.

Usually, only one or two councillors choose to spend their personal development and training allowance on governance training.

"It is much more cost-effective to get a group together," Ms Garland McLellan said.

"It meant we were able to run the course in Goondiwindi, instead of bringing one councillor to Brisbane."

Ms Garland McLellan is an experienced board director with current directorships, an international expert on corporate governance, and a consultant to mid and small-cap boards on corporate governance issues.

She champions the cause of boards required to shoulder enormous responsibility on a shoestring budget.

"Government sector, mid/small cap, and not-for-profit boards need tailored solutions, not cut down versions of programs designed to fit large listed boards," she said.