



# Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Katrina Humphries  
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## MINUTES

### GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, 31 MAY 2019 THEATRETTE, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY

The meeting opened at 9.00 a.m.

#### 1. ATTENDANCE:

Armidale Regional Council, Cr Simon Murray, Mayor  
Bega Valley Shire Council, Cr Kristy McBain, Mayor  
Bellingen Shire Council, Cr Dominic King, Mayor  
Bland Shire Council, Cr Brian Monaghan, Mayor  
Bland Shire Council, Mr Ray Smith, General Manager  
Blayney Shire Council, Cr Scott Ferguson, Mayor  
Blayney Shire Council, Ms Rebecca Ryan, General Manager  
Bourke Shire Council, Cr Barry Hollman, Mayor  
Broken Hill City Council, Cr Darriea Turley, Mayor  
Broken Hill city Council, Mr James Roncon, General Manager  
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor  
Cabonne Shire Council, Ms Heather Nicholls, Acting General Manager  
Carrathool Shire Council, Cr Peter Laird, Mayor  
Carrathool Shire Council, Mr, Rick Warren General Manager  
Coffs Harbour City Council, Mr Stephen McGrath, General Manager  
Coolamon Shire Council, Cr John Seymour, Mayor  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Abb McAlister  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Dennis Palmer, Deputy Mayor  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Phil McMurray, Acting  
General Manager  
Cowra Shire Council, Cr Bill West, Mayor  
Dubbo Regional Council, Cr Ben Shields. Mayor  
Dubbo Regional Council, Mr Michael McMahan, CEO  
Dungog Shire Council, Cr Tracy Norman, Mayor  
Dungog Shire Council, Ms Coralie Nichols, General Manager  
Eurobodalla Shire Council, Cr Liz Innes, Mayor  
Federation Council, Cr Patrick Bourke, Mayor  
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor  
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager

Gilgandra Shire Council, Cr Ash Walker, Deputy Mayor  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Bob Kirk, Mayor  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Peter Walker, Deputy Mayor  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Mr Warrick Bennett, General Manager  
Griffith City Council, Cr John Dal Broi, Mayor  
Griffith City Council, Mr Brett Stonestreet, General Manager  
Gunnedah Shire Council, Cr Jamie Chaffey, Mayor  
Gunnedah Shire Council, Mr Eric Growth, General Manager  
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr John Coulton, Mayor  
Gwydir Shire Council, Mr Max Eastcott, General Manager  
Inverell Shire Council, Cr Paul Harmon, Mayor  
Kempsey Shire Council, Cr Liz Campbell, Mayor  
Kempsey Shire Council, Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager  
Kiama Municipal Council, Cr Mark Honey, Mayor  
Kyogle Council, Cr Danielle Mulholland, Mayor  
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Paul Maytom, Mayor  
Leeton Shire Council, Ms Jackie Kruger, General Manager  
Lithgow City Council, Cr Ray Thompson, Mayor  
Lithgow City Council, Mr Graeme Faulkner, General Manager  
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Cr Andrew Hope, Mayor  
Lockhart Shire Council, Cr Roger Schirmer, Mayor  
Lockhart Shire Council, Mr Peter Veneris, General Manager  
Mid-Western/Mudgee Regional Council, Cr Des Kennedy, Mayor  
Mid-Western/Mudgee Regional Council, Mr Brad Cam, General Manager  
Moree Plains Shire Council, Cr Katrina Humphries, Mayor  
Moree Plains Shire Council, Mr Lester Rogers, General Manager  
Murray River Council, Cr Christopher Bilkey, Mayor  
Murray River Council, Mr Des Bilske, General Manager  
Murrumbidgee Council, Mr John Scarce, General Manager  
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Catherine Redding, Mayor  
Narrabri Shire Council, Mr Stewart Todd, General Manager  
Narrandera Shire Council, Cr Neville Schenka, Mayor  
Narrandera Shire Council, Mr George Cowan, General Manager  
Narromine Shire Council, Cr Craig Davies, Mayor  
Oberon Shire Council, Cr Kathy Sajowitz, Mayor  
Oberon Shire Council, Ms Lynette Safranek, Director Corporate Services  
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor  
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Barbara Newton, Deputy Mayor  
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Alan Ward  
Port Stephens Council, Cr Ryan Palmer, Mayor  
Port Stephens Council, Tim Crosdale, Group Manager Development Services  
Shoalhaven City Council, Cr Amanda Findley, Mayor  
Shoalhaven City Council, Mr Stephen Dunshea, Acting General Manager  
Singleton Council, Cr Sue Moore, Mayor  
Temora Shire Council, Cr Rick Firman, Mayor  
Temora Shire Council, Mr Gary Lavelle, General Manager  
Tenterfield Shire Council, Cr Peter Petty, Mayor  
Tenterfield Shire Council, Mr Terry Dodds, General Manager  
Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Cr John Stafford, Mayor  
Uralla Shire Council, Cr Michael Pearce, Mayor  
Wagga Wagga City Council, Cr Greg Conkey, Mayor  
Walcha Council, Cr Eric Noakes, Mayor

Walcha Council, Mr Jack O'Hara, General Manager  
Warren Shire Council, Cr Katrina Walker  
Warren Shire Council, Mr Glen Wilcox, General Manager  
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Denis Todd, Mayor  
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Mr Roger Bailey, General Manager  
Wentworth Shire Council, Cr Melisa Hendrics, Mayor  
Yass Valley Council, Cr Rowena Abbey, Mayor  
Yass Valley Council, Ms Sharon Hutch, General Manager  
Orana Joint Organisation, Ms Berlinda Barlow, Interim Executive Officer  
Cr Linda Scott, President, LGNSW

**APOLOGIES:**

As submitted

**SPECIAL GUESTS:**

Hon Shelley Hancock, MP, Minister for Local Government  
Gordon Hinds, Managing Director, Better Energy Technology  
Hon Brad Hazzard, MP, Minister for Health and Medical Research  
Andrew Roberts, CEO, Field Solutions Group  
Cr Bruce Miller, Chairman, LGSuper

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 8 March 2019 be accepted as a true and accurate record (Singleton Council / Oberon Shire Council).

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

NIL

**4. CORRESPONDENCE**

Outward

- (a) Cr Linda Scott, President, Local government NSW, regarding Defined Benefits Scheme Contributions
- (b) Cr Ryan Palmer, Mayor, port Stephens Council, advising that Port Stephens Council was admitted as a member of the Association on 8 March 2019
- (c) Mr Richard Colbran, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Rural doctors Network thanking him for his presentation to the 8 March 2019 meeting
- (d) Cr Melissa Hederics, Mayor, Wentworth Shire Council, advising that Wentworth Shire Council was admitted as a member of the Association on 8 March 2019

Inward

- (a) Cr Linda Scott, President, Local Government NSW. forwarding letters to LGSuper regarding the Defined Benefits Scheme (Copy Attached)
- (b) Institute Public Works Engineering Australia (NSW Division) advising that the Local Roads Congress will be held in Sydney on 3 June 2019

NOTED

**5. Financial Report**

RESOLVED That the financial reports for the last quarter were tabled and accepted (Temora Shire Council / Shoalhaven City Council)

**6. Royalties for Regions Program**

RESOLVED That Country Mayors calls upon the NSW Government to implement a “Royalties for Regions” program based upon a set percentage of royalties being returned to Local Government Areas from where they originate and/or that are directly affected.

That LGA representatives from the identified affected areas be invited to participate in the redesign of the new “Royalties for Regions program” (Gunnedah Shire Council / Singleton Council)

**7. Increased Fire Management Activities**

RESOLVED That the Country Mayors Association write to the appropriate Federal and State Ministers requesting that NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW Forestry Corporation and NSW Local Land Services, as a duty of care undertake an increased level of park and forest fire management activities, including increased hazard reduction burns and increased numbers of dams and water infrastructure points for firefighting purposes into the future (Tenterfield Shire Council / Kyogle Shire Council)

**8. RFS Contribution Increase 2019/10**

RESOLVED (a) That the Country Mayors Association supports the LGNSW campaign strongly and the State Government be requested to defer any RFS contribution increases for at least 12 months to allow for consultation and any future increases be shown on a separate line on the rate notice and not be included in the rate pegging formula

(b) That the Association write to the Premier requesting that the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal be directed to investigate the current Emergency Services arrangements in NSW including the efficiencies and effectiveness to be gained by such an investigation (Kempsey Shire Council / Yass valley Council)

**9. HON SHELLEY HANCOCK, MP, MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Minister started her career in Sydney as a teacher and then settled in Ulladulla where she also taught. She was elected to Shoalhaven City Council in 1987 and served four terms. She ran for State Parliament was elected and became Speaker of Parliament in 2011 and Minister for Local Government in 2019

The increased RFS contributions are mostly going towards the funded Compensation Scheme. The Minister lobbied on behalf of Local Government to have the increase adsorbed by the State Government but sadly that is not the case as it was overturned by Treasury. The Minister is anxious to have improved relations with Joint Organisations and a meeting with the Joint Organisations was

held on Thursday 30 May to discuss issues. Seed funding of \$300,000 will soon come to an end. The Office of Local Government is looking at ways Joint Organisations can be self funded and is looking at issues raised at yesterdays meeting. The Office of Local Government has not been disbanded contrary to rumours.

**10. Gordon Hinds, Managing Director, Better Energy Technology**

The energy market in Australia is undergoing a revolution as we migrate from centralised large-scale coal generation to distributed renewable energy. The role of towns throughout NSW in this revolution is not clear and to date there have not been many benefits that flowed through to them beyond the initial construction.

Basically renewable energy plants are highly automated and don't employ people, certainly not in the local communities other than occasional maintenance. Developers mostly by-pass section 94 contributions as they are classified as 'state significant' developments. The energy they produce goes into the grid and is bought by large scale users or retailers and then sold back to communities through the existing channels. Rural towns are being ripped off and bypassed.

There is another way and that is what Better Energy Technology is trying to do at Lockhart, with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Regional Development, Michael McCormack.

The Lockhart demonstration will supply power to the town of Lockhart, insulate it from blackouts, provide long-term stable energy pricing and have the potential for a dividend if the Council takes an equity position in the project. It is an Australian first and follows a design that has been in Germany for nearly 20 years - an 'export' model where 80% of the power produced is exported into the grid. It has a 10MW solar farm a large battery, the fixed power tariff is to be 28 cents a kilowatt, with long term income to council of possibly \$500,000 PA. The project cost is \$30 Million.

There are barriers to this being rolled out in NSW and the key one is access to the grid via the local substation. Most of the applications to connect to the grid through the substations are already in the hands of developers, mostly foreign owned or backed. None of these applications have community benefit at the heart of their plan, nor localised generation for local consumption. This can change.

The Minister for Energy has the power to direct the grid owners (Essential Energy in most cases) to give priority to projects that have a direct benefit in energy supply to local communities. He can do this in the simple form of a letter. With the political landscape now secure at both the Federal and State Level, now is the time for Country Mayors to step up to ensure their communities are part of this revolution and beneficiaries beyond construction. There is a need to push for long-term energy supply directly to communities such as what is planned at Lockhart.

It is possible, but it will require strong lobbying to ensure the Ministers act in the interests of communities

RESOLVED That the Country Mayors' Association make representations to the NSW Energy Minister and the Federal Energy Ministers seeking their support for the prioritisation of electricity grid connections at substations that are relevant to rural and regional towns, with priority to be given to applications that have an ongoing community benefit beyond construction of new energy developments that connect to those substations (Lockhart Shire Council / Bland Shire Council)

**11. Hon Brad Hazzard, MP, Minister for Health and Medical Research**

The Minister has tried to get around the regions as much as possible. There is a huge commitment by the State Government for the regions to get a fair go. One third of the State budget \$25billion is allocated to health. 25% of health infrastructure is to go to the regions. As part of the regional commitment the Regional Ambulance Update program has been allocated \$122million and many hospitals are being upgraded. The Government is trying to get medical students to do their training in the regions as this has proven to have higher success in keeping graduates in rural areas. Training facilities are situated in Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Orange. Tele Health Stroke services are being introduced.

**12. Andrew Roberts, CEO, Field Solutions Group**

Field Solutions Vision is to be Australia's Leading Rural, Remote and Regional Telecommunications Provider through carrier services, retail services provision and Cloud services. Their brands are Just ISP and Ant Communications. Field Solutions provide township base networks built to the populations and multisite on farm networks. They strive to greatly reduce council spend, to provide connectivity to council premises, a business grade symmetric network with additional Cloud services and true broadband deep into communities that is cost effective with unlimited data. They provide coverage throughout NSW in three corridors, Northern, Central and Southern with local bases, hiring local staff, using local businesses, and providing on going support and maintenance. \$100 million has been pledged by the Nationals. The assistance needed is Regional Digital Connectivity, growing local communities, Community/FSG funded and Council/FSG funded

RESOLVED That the Association write to the Deputy Premier advising that it supports Rural Regional Internet Connectivity through Field Solutions and requests urgent attention to this matter (Narromine Shire Council / Shoalhaven City Council)

**13. Cr Bruce Miller, Chairman, LGSuper**

LGSuper originated from State Super 23 years ago. A Trust Deed and Constitution were prepared. The Defined Benefits Scheme was funded prior to the financial crisis at a surplus, and councils took the opportunity to receive a holiday from

contributions but to put the saved funding aside. The financial crisis resulted in the fund going into deficit. The fund is examined each year to assess its position. Regulated funds need to be fully funded each and every day of the year. LGSuper looked at options to be 100% funded. Investments are currently 80% growth 20% conservative but the objective is 70% growth 30% conservative. The Board has reviewed the two LGNSW resolutions. The current investment strategy is subject to stringent reviews and a further review as suggested is not necessary. In respect of Past Service Contributions after considering advice of actuary and legal opinions LGSuper will look at the level of contributions. LGNSW cannot instruct LGSuper. Irrespective of where Directors come from their responsibility is to the entity and its members. Shares in LGSuper have zero value but shareholders have a right to appoint Directors. Under new legislation the Regulator has power to do whatever. The Board will increase from 8 Directors to 9 Directors one independent to be the Chair with 3 independents, 3 employee and 3 employer representation.

**14. Meeting with Local Government Super**

NOTED

**15. Local Government Superannuation Report by Goulburn/Mulwaree**

NOTED

**16. Waste Levy Taskforce**

RESOLVED1. The NSW Country Mayors recognise that:

- a) The NSW Government still has no clear plan to manage waste in light of the China Sword and other international changes to recycling.
  - b) That land fill sites are processing higher amounts of waste and therefore shortening the lifecycle of these sites.
  - c) That the increase in waste going to landfill also increases the governments revenue and has impacts on the wider environment.
  - d) That NSW are falling behind other States such as Victoria and SA in terms of management of waste
  - e) That Local Government Areas (LGAs) should receive a higher amount of the waste Levy to deal with increase in cost to manage waste.
  - f) That Councils are the best placed government bodies to develop new strategies and industries to better manage waste for their communities.
2. That NSW Country Mayors urge the Minister for Local Government take action by
- a) Establishing a Waste Levy Task Force consisting of EPA, Mayors and LGNSW to begin immediate action to address the waste concerns of LGAs
  - b) Returning the full amount of the waste Levy to LGA's till there is an acceptable outcome agreed to by all parties.
3. That NSW Country Mayor's Association take their own action by:
- a) establish a working group of Country Mayors to:
    - i) identify the total amount of waste levies collected by the NSW Government from regional Councils
    - ii) identify the amount spent by the NSW government on waste reduction strategies in regional areas

- iii) identify strategies for regional councils to withhold payment of the waste levy might be implemented if the NSW Government does not agree to form the task force recommended in (2) above
- iv) bring a report back to the next meeting of the Country Mayors outlining options available to Country Mayors to get action on the Waste Levy, including consideration of the withholding of payment of the levy.
- v) the working group comprise Michael Pearce (Uralla Shire Council), Peter Petty (Tenterfield Shire Council), Amanda Findley (Shoalhaven City Council) Tracey Norman (Dungog Shire Council) and Dominic King (Bellingen Shire Council)

4. That LGNSW be advised of Country Mayors position  
(Bellingen shire Council / Shoalhaven City Council)

<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/waste/waste-levy/scheduled-waste>

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/sustainability/nsw-waste-crisis-landfill-levy-gains-20190104-p50pp3.html>

<https://www.lgnsw.org.au/news/publication/save-our-recycling>

## **17. Rural Fire Act 1997 - Grasslands**

RESOLVED that Country Mayors ask the RFS Commissioner to have a stay on implementation of the requirements under the Rural Fire Act 1997 to cover grasslands and an invitation be issued to the Commissioner to attend a future meeting (Gwydir Shire Council / Lockhart Shire Council)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.40pm.

Cr Katrina Humphries  
Chair – Country Mayor's Association of NSW