



Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Ken Keith
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MINUTES

GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2020 COCKLE BAY ROOM, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE,
SYDNEY

The meeting opened at 10.55 a.m.

1 ATTENDANCE:

Armidale Regional Council, Mr Viv May, Administrator
Armidale Regional Council, Mr John Rayner, Acting CEO
Berrigan Shire Council, Cr Matthew Hannan, Mayor
Bland Shire Council, Cr Brian Monaghan, Mayor
Blayney Shire Council, Cr Scott Ferguson, Mayor
Blayney Shire Council, Ms Rebecca Ryan, General Manager
Broken Hill City Council, Cr Darriea Turley, Mayor
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor
Cabonne Shire Council, Mr Brad Burns, General Manager
Coffs Harbour City Council, Cr Denise Knight, Mayor
Coffs Harbour City Council, Cr George Cecato, Deputy Mayor
Coffs Harbour City Council, Mr Stephen McGrath
Coolamon Shire Council, Cr Bruce Hutcheon, Deputy Mayor
Coolamon Shire Council, Mr Tony Donoghue, General Manager
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Abb McAlister Mayor
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Phil McMurray, General Manager
Dubbo Regional Council, Cr Ben Shields. Mayor
Dungog Shire Council, Cr John Connors, Mayor
Dungog Shire Council, Mr Gareth Curtis, General Manager
Eurobodalla shire Council, Cr Liz Innes, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Chris Roylance, Deputy Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager
Glen Innes Shire Council, Cr Carol Sparkes, Mayor
Gunnedah Shire Council, Cr Jamie Chaffey, Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr John Coulton, Mayor
Gwydir, Shire Council, Mr Max Eastcott, General Manager
Hay Shire Council, Cr Jenny Dwyer, Mayor

Hay Shire Council, Mr David Webb, General Manager
Kempsey Shire Council, Cr Liz Campbell, Mayor
Kempsey Shire Council, Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Paul Maytom , Mayor
Leeton Shire Council, Ms Jackie Kruger, General Manager
Lithgow City Council, Cr Wayne McAndrew, Deputy Mayor
Lithgow City Council, Mr Craig Butler, General Manager
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Cr Doug Hawkins, Mayor
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Ms Joanna Sangster, General Manager
Moree Plains Shire Council, Cr Katrina Humphries, Mayor
Murray River Council, Cr Christopher Bilkey, Mayor
Murray River Council, Cr Nikki Cohen Deputy Mayor
Murray River Council, Mr Des Bilske, General Manager
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Ron Campbell, Mayor
Narrabri Shire Council, Mr Stewart Todd, General Manager
Oberon Council, Cr Kathy Sajowitz, Mayor
Oberon Council, Mr Gary Wallace, General Manager
Orange City Council, Cr Reg Kidd, Mayor
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Mr Tim Overall, Mayor
Shoalhaven City Council, Cr Amanda Findley, Mayor
Singleton Council, Cr Sue Moore, Mayor
Singleton Shire Council, Mr Jason Linnane, General Manager
Temora Shire Council, Cr Rick Firman, Mayor
Temora Shire Council, Mr Garry Lavelle, General Manager
Tenterfield Shire Council, Cr Peter Petty, Mayor
Tenterfield Shire Council, Mr Terry Dodds, General Manager
Uralla Shire Council, Cr Michael Pearce, Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Ms Kate Jessop, General Manager
Warren Shire Council, Milton Quigley, Mayor
Warren Shire Council, Mr Rolly Lawford, Divisional Manager Engineering Services
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Ambrose Doolan, Mayor
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Mr Roger Bailey, General Manager
LGNSW, President, Cr Linda Scott

APOLOGIES:

As submitted

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Professor, Mary O’Kane, NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry
Peter Duncan AM, Member Independent Panel for the Road Classification Review
and Transfer
Hon Mick Veitch MLC, Shadow Minister for Industry and Trade, Rural Roads, Rural
Affairs and Western NSW

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 6 March 2020 be
accepted as a true and accurate record (Singleton Council / Queanbeyan-Palerang
Regional Council)

3. Professor, Mary O’Kane, NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry

The NSW Bush Fire Inquiry Report by Dave Owens APM and Professor Mary O’Kane has worked to understand what happened during the 2019-20 bush fire season and how it was different to seasons that have come before, and to make 76 recommendations for future improvements to how NSW plans and prepares for, and responds to, bush fires. The season showed us what damage megafires can do, and how dangerous they can be for communities and firefighters. It is clear that we should expect fire seasons like 2019-20, or potentially worse, to happen again.

The 2019-20 bush fire season challenged conventional assumptions. For example, it appears that the extreme dryness of forested regions over large continuous areas was the determining factor in the size of the fires. When taken together with the weather conditions experienced, the fires became extreme, burning through forests and across bare earth. This season also challenged assumptions about how we fight fires. We need to know much more about bush fire suppression methods and how effective they are, especially in the face of megafires like these.

There are important firefighting enhancements needed – more emphasis on getting fires out early; improved backburning protocols, training and information around heavy plant use; the right mix of aerial firefighting assets; and increased aerial night firefighting. There is also a need for improved telecommunications. We need to push available technologies harder, especially fire science, remote sensing, data science and artificial intelligence to equip us better to understand what happens during a bush fire and respond more quickly. Central to the way forward must be improving local preparedness and resilience.

Independent Planning Commission recommendations to continue and Minister has issued a statement of expectation regarding determinations. The Commission will be meeting elected officials and management.

4. CR LINDA SCOTT, PRESIDENT, LGNSW

Cr Scott provided a brief on the work of LGNSW and outlined opportunities for further collaboration (Copy Attached)

5. Membership

RESOLVED that Richmond Valley Council be admitted as a member of the Association (Singleton Council/ Tenterfield Shire Council)

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Outward

- (a) The Hon Brad Hazzard, Minister for Health and Medical Research requesting an update on forensic pathology provision in regional areas
- (b) Ms Susan Madden, Board Member, Murray Darling Basin Authority. thanking her for her presentation to the 6 March meeting
- (c) Lindsay White Hilary Johnson, Directors, Commonwealth Environmental Water office, thanking them for their presentations to the 6 March meeting

- (d) The Hon Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing, thanking her for her presentation to the 6 March meeting
- (e) Cr R W Sheaffe, Mayor, Hay Shire, advising that his Councils application for membership was successful
- (f) Ms Theresa Corbin, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network thanking her for her presentation to the 6 March meeting
- (g) Mr Rob Rogers AFSM, Deputy Commissioner, NSW Rural Fire Services, thanking him for his presentation to the 6 March meeting
- (h) Hon Jennifer Gardner, Chairperson, NSW Local Government Grants Commission, thanking her for her presentation to the 6 March meeting
- (i) Mr David Harris, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Water, thanking him for his presentation to the 6 March meeting
- (j) The Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade, regarding the necessity to have rail crossings of State Highways at grade in respect to the Inland Rail
- (k) The Hon Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Regional Development, regarding the necessity to have rail crossings of State Highways at grade in respect to the Inland Rail
- (l) Cr Bruce Miller, Chair of Board Local Government Super, asking for the Board to assist rural communities by allowing a two year moratorium on the payment of additional contributions to the Defined Benefit Plan
- (m) Mr David Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Super, asking for the Board to assist rural communities by allowing a two year moratorium on the payment of additional contributions to the Defined Benefit Plan
- (n) The Hon Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government, Assistant Trade and Investment Minister, requesting a review of the Financial Assistance Grants criteria to include disability factors for natural disasters such as drought and bush fires
- (o) The Hon Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government, requesting a review of the Financial Assistance Grants criteria to include disability factors for natural disasters such as drought and bush fires
- (p) The Hon Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government, requesting a reply to our letter dated 3 June 2019 regarding Waste to Energy
- (q) Ms Felicity Gemmell-Smith, Special Education Programs Manager, GP Synergy, advising that Country Mayors is encouraging members to nominate a staff member as a contact for potential rural doctors
- (r) Ms Margaret Crawford, Auditor General, NSW, Re Accounting Requirements of RFS Assets

Inward

- (a) Ms Theresa Corbin, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network Re membership of the Rural Regional and Remote Communications Coalition
- (b) The Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Energy and the Arts Re the replacement of private electricity poles
- (c) Mr Phil Stockwell, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Super, Re Defined Benefits Contribution
- (d) Ms Anne Skewers, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands, Planning Industry and Environment Re Local Land Agreements

- (e) Mr Rob Rogers AFSM, Commissioner, NSW Rural Fire Service, thanking Country Mayors for their appreciation of the Service
- (f) The Hon Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government, regarding contributions to the Defined Benefits Scheme
- (g) The Hon Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government, regarding Waste to Energy
- (h) Margaret Crawford, Auditor New South Wales, regarding Reporting of Rural Fire Service assets

NOTED

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

RESOLVED that the financial reports for the last quarter were tabled and accepted (Uralla Shire Council / Bland Shire Council)

8. Peter Duncan AM, Member Independent Panel for the Road Classification Review and Transfer and Commissioner of the independent Planning Commission

In February 2019 the Minister made a commitment to initiate the Road Classification Review and to transfer up to 15,000km of Regional Road to State management. The panel was appointed and the draft Terms of Reference released for Council feedback in February 2020. The Terms of Reference and information paper was released in June 2020 with consultation in July/August 2020. Deadline for nominations on all roads proposed for priority and non-priority reclassification and/ or transfer was September 2020. Priority submissions are open to the end of 2020. Submissions for the full round open in March 2021 and close in May 2021 with a final report to the Minister in July 2021. In the next week the Panel will open the priority submission process and priority assessment framework based on six key principles of Future Transport 2056 - Customer focused, Successful places, A strong economy, Safety and performance, Accessible services and Sustainable, and three primary outcomes - lighten the load on regional councils net better off position for councils, Support regional employment, Support state-wide network improvements. The assessment framework will show how these will be aligned and measured

9. Hon Mick Veitch MLC, Shadow Minister for Industry and Trade, Rural Roads, Rural Affairs and Western NSW

Mr Veitch outlined his experiences of touring regional NSW as the Shadow Minister and meeting with locals. Local Government is at the forefront of their local economies and changes should not find councils worse off financially. Quarterly reports by the Government are to be provided to the Upper House. Cost of Council election issues will be referred to the Shadow Minister for Local Government. Some councils want to revert back from amalgamations and a report on the real cost of amalgamations is available. A National Food, Fibre and Security Plan needs to be implemented

- 10. Distribution of NSW Electoral Districts**
RESOLVED that the Association support Leeton Shire Councils submission to the NSW Electoral Commission on the Redistribution of NSW Electoral Districts (Leeton Shire Council/Gunnedah Shire Council)
- 11. Rural Fire Service Assets**
RESOLVED that the Association continue to follow up the advice of the Auditor General that at the end of the 2019/20 reporting cycle the Office will review the technical arguments (Tenterfield Shire Council/Kempsey Shire Council)
- 12. Destruction of CMA Files**
RESOLVED that That the Country Mayors Files to 2010 held by Coffs Harbour City Council be disposed of by Coffs Harbour City Council (Singleton Council/ Forbes Shire Council)
- 13. IPART Review of Local Government Rating System**
RESOLVED that the Association support Bland Shire Councils submission to the Minister for Local Government to not have legislated recommendation 34 of the 2016 IPART Review of the NSW Local Government Rating System (Bland Shire Council/Blaney Shire Council)
- 14. Emergency Management Reform**
RESOLVED That the Association support Eurobodalla Shire Councils submission to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disasters-Local Government and natural disasters (Eurobodalla Shire Council/Tenterfield Shire Council)
- 15. Federal Government Policy on Water Security**
RESOLVED that Country Mayors
(a) Advocate to the Australian Government to increase their funding and involvement in the provision of secure water supply for towns and cities across regional Australia.
(b) Advocate to the NSW Government to waive NSW Government costs associated with essential water infrastructure (Eurobodalla Shire Council/Leeton Shire Council)
- 16. Enquiry into Rural Health**
RESOLVED that Association prepare a submission to the Enquiry into Rural Health and the Minister for Health be invited to the next meeting of Country Mayors (Leeton Shire Council/Gunnedah Shire Council)
- 17. Local Government Exclusion from National Cabinet**
RESOLVED that Country Mayors lobbies the Prime Minister to have Local Government represented on the National Cabinet with membership from ALGA Leeton Shire Council/Forbes Shire Council)
- 18. Insurance Companies Assisting Families Affected by Fires**
RESOLVED that Country Mayors advocate
(a) to the Commonwealth to extend rental relief to bushfire affected individuals and families who lost their primary dwelling in the 2019/20 bushfires and that are

- now renting temporary accommodation through their insurance policy where in most cases cover will increase after 12 months
- (b) to insurance companies and the Insurance Council of Australia to extend the 12 month period of rental assistance available to those residents who have lost their primary dwelling in the 2019/20 bushfires (Shoalhaven City Council/Broken Hill City Council)

19. Next Meeting

Sydney Airport Corporation be invited to the next meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.58pm.

Cr Ken Keith
Chairman Country Mayor's Association of NSW