



Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Ken Keith OAM
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MINUTES

GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, 28 MAY 2021 THEATRETTE, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY

The meeting opened at 8.35 a.m.

1. ATTENDANCE:

Bega Valley Shire Council, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Mayor
Bland Shire Council, Mr Ray Smith, General Manager
Blayney Shire Council, Cr Scott Ferguson, Mayor
Blayney Shire Council, Ms Rebecca Ryan, General Manager
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor
Cabonne Shire Council, Mr Brad Burns, General Manager
Coolamon Shire Council, Cr Bruce Hutcheon, Deputy Mayor
Coolamon Shire Council, Mr Tony Donoghue, General Manager
Coonamble Shire Council, Cr Allan Karanouh, Mayor
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Abb McAlister
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Phil McMurray, General Manager
Cowra Shire Council, Cr Bill West, Mayor
Cowra Shire Council, Mr Paul Devery, General Manager
Dubbo Regional Council, Mr Dean Frost, CEO
Dungog Shire Council, Cr John Connors, Mayor
Dungog Shire Council, Mr Gareth Curtis, General Manager
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Bob Kirk, Mayor
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Mr Warrick Bennett, General Manager
Griffith City Council, Cr John Dal Broi, Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr John Coulton, Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council, Mr Max Eastcott, General Manager
Hay Shire Council, Cr Jenny Dwyer, Mayor
Hilltops Council, Cr Brian Ingram, Mayor
Kempsey Shire Council, Cr Liz Campbell, Mayor

Kempsey Shire Council, Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager
Kiama Municipal Council, Cr Mark Honey, Mayor
Kiama Municipal Council, Mr Mike Dowd, Acting General Manager
Kyogle Council, Cr Danielle Mulholland, Mayor
Lachlan Shire Council, Cr John Medcalf, Mayor
Lachlan Shire Council, Mr Greg Tory, General Manager
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Paul Maytom , Mayor
Leeton Shire Council, Cr George Weston, Deputy Mayor
Lithgow City Council, Cr Ray Thompson, Mayor
Lockhart Shire Council, Cr Roger Schirmer, Mayor
Lockhart Shire Council, Mr Peter Veneris, General Manager
Moree Plains Shire Council, Cr Katrina Humphries, Mayor
Murray River Council, Cr Christopher Bilkey, Mayor
Murray River Council, Mr Terry Dodds, CEO
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Ron Campbell, Mayor
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Cameron Staines, Deputy Mayor
Narrabri Shire Council, Mr Stewart Todd, General Manager
Oberon Council, Cr Kathy Sajowitz, Mayor
Oberon Council, Mr Gary Wallace, General Manager
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor
Parkes Shire Council, Mr Kent Boyd, General Manager
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Mr Tim Overall, Mayor
Shoalhaven City Council, Cr Amanda Findley, Mayor
Shoalhaven City Council, Mr Stephen Dunshea, CEO
Singleton Council, Cr Sue Moore, Mayor
Tamworth Regional Council, Cr Col Murray, Mayor
Tamworth Regional Council, Mr Paul Bennett, General Manager
Temora Shire Council, Cr Rick Firman, Mayor
Temora Shire Council, Ms Elizabeth Smith, Director Administration and Finance
Tenterfield Shire Council, Cr Peter Petty, Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Cr Michael Pearce, Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Ms Kate Jessep, General Manager
Walcha Council, Cr Eric Noakes, Mayor
Walcha Council, Mr Chris Weber, Acting General Manager
Warren Shire Council, Cr Milton Quigley, Mayor
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Ambrose Doolan, Mayor
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Mr Roger Bailey, General Manager
LGNSW, Cr Linda Scott, President
LGNSW, Mr Scott Phillips, CEO
Canberra Regional Joint Organisation, Kalina Koloff, CEO
Central NSW Joint Organisation, Jenny Bennett, Executive Offocer

APOLOGIES:

As submitted

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Hon Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing
Mr Shane Fitzsimmons, Commissioner, Resilience NSW

The Chairman Cr Ken Keith thanked members of the Executive for their input into the agenda and thanked member councils for their feedback to the issues of importance

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 5 March 2021 be accepted as a true and accurate record (Tenterfield Shire Council / Leeton Shire Council).

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

State Governments commitment to roads

4. CORRESPONDENCE

Outward

(a) The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister, Re the removal of Part 1, Section 6, of the Local Government Assistance Act 1995

(b) The Hon Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government, Re the removal of Part 1, Section 6, of the Local Government Assistance Act 1995

(c) Cr Linda Scott, President, Local Government NSW, Re the removal of Part 1, Section 6, of the Local Government Assistance Act 1995

(d) The Chief Executive, Australian Local Government Association, Re the removal of Part 1, Section 6, of the Local Government Assistance Act 1995

(e) the Chairperson, NSW Local Government Grants Commission, Re the removal of Part 1, Section 6, of the Local Government Assistance Act 1995

(f) Hon Brad Hazard MP, Minister for Health and Medical Research, opposing the establishment of COVID quarantine accommodation in rural areas

(g) Cr John Medcalf OAM, Mayor, Lachlan Shire Council, advising that Lachlan Shire Council had been admitted as a member of the Country Mayors Association

(h) The Hon Brad Hazzard MP, Minister for Health and Medical Research, thanking him for his presentation to the 6 March meeting

(i) Mr David Salisbury, Executive Manager Engineering, Essential Energy, thanking him for his presentation to the 6 March meeting

(j) The Hon David Elliott, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, regarding significant increases in contributions for emergency services payable by councils

(k) The Hon Shelley Hancock MP, Minister for Local Government, regarding significant increases in contributions for emergency services payable by councils

(l) Mr Scott Phillips, Chief Executive, Local Government NSW, regarding lead organisations for the identified rural council issues

(m) letter Councillor Ben Shield, Dubbo City Council, sending sincere best wishes

Inward

(a) Cr Linda Scott, President, LGNSW, regarding Financial Assistance Grants

(b) Cr Linda Scott, President, LGNSW, regarding council costs to support health professionals and services in regional, rural and remote areas

NOTED

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

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

6. Cr Linda Scott, President, LGNSW

Cr Scott outlined the current situation regarding the Emergency Services Levy that was passed by both Houses of Parliament allowing the levy to be shown as a separate item on the rate notice and not be part of the allowable rate increase and the notice forwarded to councils by the Office of Local Government telling councils not to act on the legislation

RESOLVED (1) That the Country Mayors Association make representations to the State Government to reconsider their decision not to pay to the Environmental Services Levy or have it separated on the rate notice as councils are conflicted as Parliament has legislated the changes but the Office of Local Government are advising councils not to act on the legislative change

(2) That until the matter is resolved member councils are asked to consider not paying the increased levy (Tenterfield Shire Council / Moree Plains Shire Council)

A report has been submitted by Cr Scott addressing advocacy wins, opportunities for collaboration, upcoming events and submissions (Copy Attached)

7. Priority Issues Health and Water Responses

NOTED

8. Report from Gunnedah Shire Council on Health Services

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the Federal Government to:

- 1 Formally acknowledge that Rural and Remote NSW Local Government areas are being seriously disadvantaged due to the critical lack of General Practitioners.

- 2 Increase the Medicare payments to General Practitioners who choose to practice in the Rural and Remote regions of NSW.
- 3 Reduce the Medicare payments to General Practitioners practicing in Metropolitan areas to offset the increased expenditure in Rural and Remote NSW. (Kyogle Council / Forbes Shire Council)

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the NSW Government to establish a new Ministry called the Ministry of Regional and Rural Health with responsibility for driving urgent improvements to Health services in Regional, Rural and Remote NSW. (Forbes Shire Council / Kyogle Council)

9. Report from Eurobodalla Shire Council on Water Security
Report withdrawn by Eurobodalla Shire Council

10. Executive Report Re Tele Health

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the NSW Government to

- 1 Enhance technological capabilities, enabling tele-health approaches for general and specialist service provision
- 2 Commit to funding "Tele-Health" in Rural and Remote communities throughout NSW as an additional service and commit that "Tele-Health" services will not be used to replace doctors in rural communities. (Temora Shire Council / Kyogle Council)

11. Executive Report Re Mental Health

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the Federal Government to:

- 1 Increase funding to Regional, Rural and Remote communities that have a evidence-based need for provision of suitable detoxification and rehabilitation facilities.
- 2 Increase funding to support Mental Health facilities and Allied Health clinicians in Regional, Rural and Remote communities. (Uralla Shire Council / Forbes Shire Council)

12. Report from Oberon Council Re Patient Transport

RESOLVED

- 1 That NSW CMA support improved Patient Transport options in Rural and Remote NSW and make representation to both NSW Health and the Federal Health Minister to simplify and improve the processes around Patient Transport to deliver more equitable outcomes.

- 2 That NSWCMA support and make representation that Patient Transport Services in Rural and Remote areas needs to be adequately funded. (Oberon Shire Council / Forbes Shire Council)

13 Executive Report Re Incentive Scheme for Training, Support and Mentoring of Health Care Professionals in Rural NSW

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the Federal Government to:

- 1 Reverse the 2019 decision to reduce the “*Skilled Migration Program’s*”, number of overseas trained doctors entering Australia until Regional, Rural and Remote NSW are serviced by adequate levels of medical professionals.
- 2 Appoint an independent suitable qualified third party to conduct a comprehensive review of the Commonwealth’s “*Workforce Incentive Program*”.
- 3 Once endorsed, call on the NSW Government to implement all recommendations from the upper house enquiry into “Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW. (Kempsey Shire Council / Kyogle Council)

14. Executive Report Support for Local Water Utilities

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the NSW Government to:

- 1 Engage with Local Government including the network of thirteen (13) Joint Organisations across NSW to support Local Water Utilities and provide a strategic, evidence-based approach to address water security and the investment in infrastructure required to underpin economic development in regional NSW Including;
 - (a) Regional pipe network systems
 - (b) Regional Water Storages
 - (c) Clear and affordable funding pathways to ensure equity
 - (d) Investment in contemporary surface and groundwater real-time monitoring and modelling and make that modelling accessible to Local Government.
 - (e) Streamline regulations in relation to recycled water reuse.
 - (f) Advocate to the NSW Government to waive NSW Government costs associated with essential water infrastructure (such as access to crown land, state forests, and biodiversity offsets).
 - (g) Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between local government water/wastewater utilities and government agencies outlining responsibilities and service level agreements.
- 2 Establish a multi-agency committee including local government with sufficient delegation to both optimise and monitor the delivery of the

Regional Water Strategies and enable a more effective response to emergencies and drought

- 3 Develop accredited training programs for skill development and quality assurance of municipal water and wastewater treatment personnel.(Tenterfield Shire Council / Uralla Shire Council)

15. National Resources Access Regulator

RESOLVED That the Country Mayors Association work on relationships between Councils and the National Resources Access Regulator and invite both a senior Executive and a Board member to attend the next meeting of the Country Mayors Association (Moree Plains Shire Council / Leeton Shire Council)

16. Executive Report Re Australian Government Investment for Water Supplies

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association:

- 1 Advocate to the Australian Government for a whole of government approach (three tiers) to major regional bulk water security initiatives.
- 2 Advocate to the Australian Government to increase their funding and involvement in the provision of secure bulk water supply projects for towns and cities across regional Australia.(Tenterfield Shire Council / Forbes Shire Council)

17. Hon Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing

Keeping Crown Land cemetery costs down is a priority as currently NSW costs are double that of Victoria. The Government is trying to get tenants to purchase aboriginal housing as it would be far cheaper for them than paying rent. The Housing 2041 Strategy has been released which deals with supply and mixture of supply. If Councils have crown land that can be developed as housing please let the Minister know. There is a Safe and Secure Water Program and a Risk Development Program. There needs to be more information on flood mitigation as there is going to be stronger growth in rural NSW

18. Mr Shane Fitzsimmons, Commissioner, Resilience NSW

There has been damage to over 50 Local Government areas in the past 18 months. On the 1 May 2020 Resilience NSW was established with a mandate to transform whole of government action to emergency situations which is married to Inquiries that government needs to do better. Resilience is very much about coordinating resources. Resilience NSW has established six locations around the State and senior staff positions are in the process of being filled. Urgent attention is being given to compounding disasters such as fire, drought and flood. The March floods affected 63 Local Government areas and natural disasters were declared in 61 of those. Progress better funding is being introduced so that infrastructure is not just replaced but the replacement addresses the future

requirements. Resilience NSW wants to partner closely with Local Government to develop a Resilience Strategy making sure there is no duplication

19. Day Light Saving

RESOLVED That the Country Mayors Association write to the Minister for Justice requesting that day light saving be reduced to four months of the year starting on the first weekend in November and finishing in the last weekend in February to be implemented no later than November 2021.(Lachlan Shire Council / Temora Shire Council)

20. Animal Welfare Cats and Dogs

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association call on the NSW Government to act as a matter of urgency to:

- 1 Update the regulations in relation to the NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice for breeding dogs and cats that applies to establishing and operating the Dog Breeding Facilities in NSW
- 2 Apply best practice standards to the New Code of Practice that aligns with the Victorian regulations acknowledging that the lack of proactive cross-border collaboration on legislative reforms in NSW/VIC is now legally forcing Riverine NSW local governments to approve large scale dog breeding facilities in accordance with the NSW planning system.(Murray River Council / Hilltops Council)

21. Short Term Accommodation Shortages and Homelessness

RESOLVED That the Country Mayors Association

- 1 declares that our respective councils are experiencing a housing crisis in respect of housing availability, social housing availability and general affordability across our communities
- 2 requests that the LGNSW conference take the issue up as one of importance for action
- 3 calls on the Federal Government to create a National Housing Plan that can support the work of local councils

22 National Water Quality Management Strategy

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the Australian, State and Territory Governments to mandate their nationally agreed policy framework within the Australian Government's National Water Quality Management Strategy, so that all Australian governments and other industries, organisations and institutions effectively manage the quality and supply of water that is fit for purpose.(Hay Shire Council /Tenterfield Shire Council)

23 Murray Darling Basin

RESOLVED That the NSW Country Mayors Association calls on the NSW Government:

- 1 To engage an independent authority to prepare a public report detailing:
 - (a) The current river monitoring performed in the Murray-Darling Basin, its distribution and data accuracy and timeliness.
 - (b) The benefits of a basin-wide consistent approach to enhanced and comprehensive river monitoring data, and its opportunities and challenges.
- 2 Following the outcomes of the report to initiate and install competent river monitoring infrastructure and programs to provide enhanced river data and analysis to support water managers improve water policy, planning, management and operations to improve and maintain water quality and supply in the Murray-Darling Basin.(Hay Shire Council / Leeton Shire Council)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.31pm.

Cr Ken Keith OAM
Chairman Country Mayor's Association of NSW