



THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

"What we want is nothing more than equity"

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MEDIA RELEASE

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AND THE WINNER IS – WESTERN SYDNEY

The New South Wales Budget is out and the news is good – if you live in Western Sydney.

The Country Mayors Association of NSW (CMA) delivered five very clear Budget priorities for regional New South Wales to the State Government after surveying the CMA's 84 member councils representing a third of New South Wales residents.

CMA Chairman Mayor Jamie Chaffey said the first look at the Budget showed while billions of dollars' worth of projects were listed for Western Sydney, New South Wales' heartland had not been heard.

"Our members and their electorates told us very clearly they need help with financial sustainability," Mayor Chaffey said. "They need help with transport and roads, with health, with housing, and with the labour shortage.

"While there are glimmers of hope among the Budget documents, the 2023-24 NSW Budget does not send a message of support to all the Councils and the millions of regional and rural people they represent. They are no surprises, and there is nothing that will help regional Councils deal with the escalating costs, the increasing demands, the massive tasks that they are faced with.

"Over the next four years, we are looking at \$7.9 billion for the Sydney Metro-Western Sydney Airport project, \$2.4 billion for Western Sydney roads, \$3.5 billion into Western Sydney schools, an increase of \$400 million for Rouse Hill Hospital (taking the total to \$700 million), and an additional \$1 billion towards the Sydney Metro City to South West project. That's more than \$14 billion for Western Sydney in those projects alone.

"Curiously, at the same time, major regional projects such as the duplication of the Great Western Highway and the Dungowan Dam project have disappeared from the Budget altogether. It is a relief to see that some critical projects – like new hospitals – remain, but we are not looking at the increase in

funding the rapid increase in construction costs requires. In comparison with the \$14 billion for Western Sydney already mentioned, regional Australia has \$1.8 billion listed for new investment.

“As regional New South Wales deals with increasing crime, it is disappointing in the extreme to see scant mention of funding to address this problem – 15 additional police officers for Murwillumbah and 20 in Western Sydney won’t go far enough.

“There are definitely some positives here for all New South Wales residents including regional residents. We are encouraged to see funding for additional paramedics, for the transition of part-time nursing staff to full-time positions, for energy rebates and for first home buyers.

“People are struggling, and these cost-of-living measures are desperately needed.

“There is still a lot of detail to come, and we will be asking the State Government to outline clearly where roads funding will go, how housing funding will be allocated and how health funding will make a practical difference in regional areas.”

CMA Scorecard for the NSW Budget 2023-24

At first glance

We asked for:

Financial sustainability:

What we asked for:

- New funding for water connections; commitment to connectivity programs; increased spending for police; increased disaster recovery funding; funding for flood management measures; removal of the Emergency Services Levy.

Budget Highlights;

44 Billion To support communities, Councils, Businesses access NSW to recover, rebuild and prosper (Details not available)

Transport and roads:

What we asked for:

- Funding for the Fixing Local Roads Program; establishment of a \$250 million program for the Fixing Country Pinch Points Program; establishment of a Country Roads Restoration Program; acceleration of Regional Road Reclassification and Transfer Program; increase regional road funding for the Block, Repair and Supplementary Grant Programs

What we received:

Budget Highlights;

- Funding for the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund, Fixing Country Bridges and Fixing Local Roads and \$95.9 million for Fixing Country Rail Program.

Health:

What we asked for:

- NSW Regional Health Minister; increase in regional incentives for doctors; training and employment of sufficient nursing staff; implementation of the recommendations from the health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote NSW.

Budget Highlights;

Funding to transition part-time nursing staff to full-time positions; additional paramedics, recommitment for Regional Health Infrastructure

Housing:

What we asked for:

- Building Country Homes Program; taskforce to identify suitable land to escalate affordable housing; initiatives to bring forward housing opportunities in Renewable Energy Zones and Special Activation Precincts; relaxation of rules under biodiversity legislation for councils trying to develop on greenfield residential land.

Budget Highlights;

New Housing Infrastructure Fund, debt financing measures, first home buyer's measures

Labour shortage:

What we asked for:

- Review of Smart and Skilled Program; commitment to funding a Building Country Trades Program; funding for training placements for future workforce needs.

Budget Highlights;

\$5.2 million to establishment Regional Future Job and Investment authorities (Details not available)

For further information, contact Cr Jamie Chaffey on 0467 402 412