



# THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

*"What we want is nothing more than equity"*

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### May General Meeting

The Friday, May 26 meeting of the Country Mayors Association of NSW was one of our organisation's best attended meetings, with more than 100 CMA members representing 82 Regional Councils from across the state.

The meeting held at Parliament House included an agenda packed with presentations from the NSW Government Ministries of Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Regional Transport and Roads, and Regional Health, along with the Opposition Shadow Ministries of Water and Crown Lands, Agriculture, Regional NSW, Western NSW, Regional Transport and Roads.

Chair of IPART, Ms Carmel Donnelly, delivered an update on the current review of the ratepegging methodology and generously allowed time for many questions from our members.

Also on the agenda were many motions from our members:

- The CMA scholarship program was endorsed and will now see CMA annually investing \$5k in a trainee, apprentice or degree student as determined by our member councils. This initiative was a finalist runner-up for the LGNSW AR Bluett Memorial Award (Regional/Rural Category) to assist in supporting youth from Regional NSW.
- A successful debate on constitutional change now allows for associate membership of CMA. Newcastle City Council have applied to join as associate members and are expected to be the first of many to come in the near future.
- Members voted unanimously to support the call for a more timely indexing process for pensioner concessions and rebates to assist pensioners in paying their Council rates and charges.
- Members supported a reduction in the duration of Daylight Savings in NSW to four months, starting on the first week of November and finishing on the last weekend of February.
- A recommendation was supported to reject the government's position on RFS assets being vested in local government. This would become a major financial burden impacting



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on Councils' ability to provide essential services to our communities. CMA will call on the Premier and NSW Parliamentary Accounts Committee to make legislative change to vest the RFS assets under the control of the NSW RFS.

- The date of the annual general meeting of CMA will now change to align with the November sitting week of State Parliament. The AGM will now be held on 24 November, 2023.

Applications for membership of Country Mayors Association were received from Mid-Coast Council, Bogan Shire Council and Greater Hume Shire Council prior to the May general meeting and formed part of the agenda. It was pleasing to see unanimous support from all members present to accept these application. Membership of CMA is now at the highest level ever seen over our forty odd years of representing Regional NSW at 82 Local Government Councils.

The May meeting also saw the milestone launch of the CMA website. After more than 40 years of continual service to Regional, Rural and Remote NSW councils, CMA have committed to a more timely promotion of all activities, advocacy of priorities, media releases and communiques that will make us more responsive to our members and the communities in which we live.

You can view our website at [nswcountrymayors.com.au](http://nswcountrymayors.com.au)

The results of the CMA annual member survey, which closed on Friday, 19 May, were shared at the meeting, and are also available on the new CMA website. Ninety percent of our members participated in the survey, making it our most successful survey to date.

Our number one issue affecting Regional Councils was financial sustainability. Housing, labour shortages, transport and roads, and health rounded out the top five issues. The survey highlighted the five most concerning emerging issues as: planning; disaster preparedness; renewable energy; water security; and crime, law and order.

More than 2000 positions are unfilled in the 71 Councils that responded. These vacancies are at levels never before seen in most Councils. 85% of responding Councils stated they have just completed a special rate variation or will need to within the next five years unless swift changes are



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made to ease the financial burden on Councils.

The next General Meeting of the Country Mayors Association of NSW will be held on Friday, 4 August at 8.30am in the theatrette at Parliament House, with early confirmed speakers including: the Minister for Local Government, the Honourable Ron Hoenig; and the Minister for Agriculture, Regional NSW and Western NSW, the Honourable Tara Moriarty.

## **Cr Jamie Chaffey – Chairman**



*Image of Country Mayors Members in Attendance*



*Image of opposition MP's in attendance*





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*Ken Keith immediate past president with new members of CMA. Right: Steve Reynolds, Mayor of Muswellbrook, Ken Keith CMA Immediate Past President Mayor of Parkes Shire Council, Barry Hollman, Mayor of Bourke Shire Council and Neil Smith, Mayor of Junee Shire Council*



*Minister For Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth and The North Coast The Hon. Rose Jackson and CMA Executive Mayor of Forbes Shire Council, Phyllis Miller.*



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*Chairman Councillor Jamie Chaffey Launching New CMA Website*



*Speakers Lining up to ask Questions about Politicians*



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*Minister for Regional Transport and Roads The Hon. Jenny Aitchison and CMA Immediate Past President, Mayor of Parkes Shire Council Ken Keith*



*Parliamentary Secretary for Health Michael Holland MP and CMA Executive Mayor of Forbes Shire Council Phyllis Miller*





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*Shadow Minister for Transport and Roads The Hon. Sam Farrow and CMA Immediate Past President, Mayor of Parkes Shire Council Ken Keith*



*Chair of Independent Pricing Tribunal {IPART} Ms Carmel Donnelly and CMA Immediate Past President, Mayor of Parkes Shire Council Ken Keith*