



2023

State Budget
Priorities
SUMMARY



“What we want is nothing more than equity”



Financial Sustainability

Country Mayors Association strongly request that the existing extremely popular grant programs that are delivering real benefits for CMA communities, such as Stronger Country Communities, Resources for Regions, Fixing Local Roads and Bridges, Safe and Secure Water and Connecting Country Communities programs continue to be funded for the next four-year term with an annual increase of at least the rate of inflation.

Ask - The government provide new funding options to support regional and rural communities where small numbers of water connections do not generate sufficient revenue to meet the operational cost.

Ask - That the NSW Government commits to funding the "Connecting Country Communities" Mobile Black Spot Program and the "Regional Digital Connectivity Program" at current annual funding levels plus inflation rate until 2027.

Ask - The NSW Government increase spending on the NSW police force to increase front-line proactive policing numbers and policing intervention programs in regional, rural and remote LGAs most in need according to the BOCSAR data.

Ask - Commitment to increase disaster recovery funding to councils for the task of assessment, clean-up and building back more resilient infrastructure and services following natural disaster events, and to reduce assessment timeline for the category of natural disasters to stop financial uncertainty impeding recovery.

Ask - NSW Government take responsibility for the management and ownership of member councils State Emergency Services buildings, including the deprecation responsibilities.

Ask - Increase the funding available to councils through the "Floodplain Management Grant Program" to remove the financial burden from local government when flood mitigation studies are conducted.

Ask - NSW Government establish a funding program that will lead to an increase in the installation of flood gauges and automated warning systems.

Ask - NSW Government Commit to policy reform that will see the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) being removed from local government.

Ask - NSW Government provide adequate funding to allow member councils to implement any and all relevant recommendations from the recent "2022 NSW Flood Enquiry".



Housing

Ask - Establishment of a funding program that will support member councils to increase the housing stock available and improve own source revenue. The “Building Country Homes Program” will be a four-year commitment that will deliver \$100 million each year.

Ask - Adequately funded and suitably qualified taskforce is created to identify suitable land in Regional, Rural and Remote LGAs to escalate the creation of affordable housing in member councils.

Ask - The Department of Planning and Environment ensures that regional housing initiatives that bring forward new housing opportunities be prioritised for Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) and Special Activation Precinct areas.

Ask - That the NSW Government relax rules under biodiversity legislation for councils trying to develop on green field residential land.



Labour Shortage

Ask - The NSW Skills Board oversee the Department of Skills and Training review of the “Smart and Skilled program” to address the inadequate access to apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship courses in member councils.

Ask - A commitment to funding a “Building Country Trades Program” to be delivered throughout member councils’ TAFE facilities or RTOs.

Ask - NSW Government agencies commit to funding the training placements to meet 100% of future workforce needs.



Transport & Roads

Ask - Commit to funding the "Fixing Local Roads Program" from 2023 through to 2027 at the same value plus inflation rate. It is also desirable that this program change to a non-contestable funding stream to allow member councils to plan for future works with certainty.

Ask - The establishment of a \$250 million funding program for Regional, Rural and Remote councils that will allow for recurring failure points in local and regional road networks to be removed – a "Fixing Country Pinch Points Program".

Ask - The establishment of a "Country Roads Restoration Program". This new state program should mirror the Commonwealth Government's Roads to Recovery Program.

Ask - Acceleration of the Regional Road Reclassification and Transfer Program (15,000km Take Back Program).

Ask - Increase regional road funding allocation to the Block, Repair and Supplementary grant programs to member councils by 30%.



Health

Ask - NSW Regional Health Minister or equivalent commits to a review of the local health districts, including operational performance and boundaries and contractual arrangements of private service providers.

Ask - That the NSW Government increases the incentives to rural generalists (doctors) to encourage greater numbers providing essential services to our member councils' residents.

Ask - That NSW Health commits to training and employing sufficient nurse practitioners to ensure every hospital and medical service in Regional, Rural and Remote NSW can provide timely service to residents

Ask - That the health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales report recommendations be implemented fully and with speed.