



THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

"What we want is nothing more than equity"

COMMUNIQUÉ

Country Mayors Association of NSW – November AGM and General Meeting

Friday, November 24 Country Mayors Association of NSW held our AGM and General meeting, this event was again strongly supported by our members and members of Parliament from all political persuasions, more than 120 people were in attendance.

The meeting was held in the Theatrette at Parliament House, Sydney and the agenda was full of guest presenters, these included the Federal Minister for Local Government and Regional Development the Hon Kristy McBain, Premier of NSW the Hon Chris Minns, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education the Hon Steve Whan, Minister For Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth and the North Coast the Hon Rose Jackson, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources the Hon Dugald Saunders, Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations the Hon Damien Tudehope and Shadow Minister for Water and Crown Lands the Hon Steph Cooke.

Also, highlights from the General meeting were:

- Members voted unanimously to endorse a new member: Central Darling Shire Council, that now brings our membership to eighty five (85) members and two (2) associate members.
- Immediate Past Chairman, Cr Ken Keith OAM gave a heartfelt acknowledgment of the outgoing Secretariat, Mr Allan Burgess detailing his 14 years service to CMA. A small gift was presented.
- Outgoing Executive, Cr John Medcalf was recognised for his dedication and service to CMA over his past term and a small token of appreciation was presented during the meeting. Cr Medcalf spoke of how proud he is to have served and commended the organisation on recent achievements.
- Forbes Shire Council and Kempsey Shire Council were named as the successful Councils to host a general meeting outside of Parliament House during 2024. These meeting dates are 8 and 9th of April in Forbes and 13 and 14th of June in Kempsey.
- A signing ceremony was conducted to reaffirm the MoU between LGNSW and CMA, the agreement was review and strengthened with the view of the two organisations, were appropriate, look to hold events that support the objectives of both organisations.
- Deputy Chairman, Mayor Rick Firman OAM announced the winner of the CMA scholarship award to Ms Hayley Gould from Forbes Shire Council, Hayley was very appreciative for the award and she gave members an incite into her career choice and what it is like working with an amazing team at Forbes Shire Council.



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- During the AGM the casual vacancy on the Executive was filled by Mayor Pat Bourke from Federation Council after a contested ballot. Congratulations to Mayor Bourke and on behalf of the Executive of CMA thank you to all who nominated for the vacancy.
- Also, during the AGM the meeting dates for 2024 were endorsed and are listed below, the membership fees for 2024 were endorsed and the appointment of a new Secretariat in RDANI was also endorsed for a twelve month period.

2024 MEETING DATES

Meetings in the Theatrette at Parliament House, Sydney in 2024 are;

March 22

April 8-9 (Forbes)

May 10

June 13-14 (Kempsey)

August 9

November 15

For more information, please view our website at nswcountrymayors.com.au

The first General Meeting of the Country Mayors Association of NSW for 2024 will be held on Friday, 22 March commencing at 8.30am in the Theatrette at Parliament House, Sydney. **Invited** speakers include the Premier of NSW, the NSW Treasurer, and the Minister for Local Government, along with the NSW Opposition Leader, Minister for Police, Shadow Minister for Police, NSW Police Commissioner, NSW Police Association representative, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR) representative and Ms Jenny Stevenson from Royal Far West.

This year was full of challenges and some amazing achievement that we should hold onto in those times of frustration, thank you for your dedication to the communities in which you serve and on behalf of the Executive of CMA, I wish all members a happy, restful and safe Christmas.

Cr Jamie Chaffey
CHAIRMAN



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**Federal Minister for Regional Development and Local Government and Territories
The Hon Kristy McBain**



The Minister outlined the doubling of funds for Roads to Recovery from \$500million to \$1billion, the commitment to Black Spots from \$100million to \$150million and the Renewing Bridges Program and the Community Infrastructure Program being combined with a budget of \$1billion.

**Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education
The Hon Steve Whan**



There is a lot of work to be done in skills and a lot of opportunities in reskilling as well as training school leavers. TAFE has had a tough decade but the government is working with TAFE to be more pertinent to their communities. Australia wide 213,000 people need to gain skills over the next 7 years. The National Skills Agreement with the Commonwealth is a five year agreement which gives certainty to TAFE and a VET review is being undertaken.

Closing the Gap is a high priority. Equality and access will provide opportunities for rural NSW. There is a large backlog of maintenance works of TAFE's and additional funds are being allocated. A strategic look at what TAFE's skills are and what is to be provided to their communities is being undertaken.



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NSW Premier

The Hon Chris Minns MP



The most important thing a government can do is listen. The last 12 months have been challenging with disasters and other events. The budget includes \$3.8billion for health, \$3.4billion for education, and \$8.2billion for cost of living measures and the success of NSW depends on regional NSW. Agriculture alone adds \$23billion to the economy. The Government wants to see long time success with jobs and financial sustainability of local government is important.

The NSW Government has recently announced and committed to reviewing Emergency Services funding in particular the Emergency Services Levy. Importantly both the community and Councils would not be financially disadvantaged through any changes in fact both should positively benefit from any such change. A high-tech metal strategy is being introduced and transition to a renewable energy economy is taking place. The government wants to listen to regional and rural NSW and when parliament is not sitting the Premier tries to visit country centres.



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**Minister for Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth and the North Coast
The Hon Jose Jackson**



The government is working on drought preparedness and what they can do as they don't want to do things on the eleventh hour. The Minister has been touring NSW to make sure communities are aware of the possibilities of drought in 2024. Free places for water technicians have been announced and Water NSW has been working with local authorities in respect of dams. The Government wants to replenish funding for water fund projects. Some projects approved in 2019 and subsequent years have not been started. These need to get going and if councils are having problems preventing work starting such as conditions let's talk about it and negotiate. Mental Health will be challenging and people will struggle as we move into drier conditions. Housing is a priority for the Government and we know that the regionals are important. There is a dedicated fund for regional housing and we are looking at social housing modules for short term housing solutions.

**Shadow Minister for Regional NSW, Agriculture and Natural Resources
The Hon Dugald Saunders**



With multiculturalism we can do better with the State and Commonwealth working together. Immigrant families could get a visa to stay with family members and there would not be any need for additional housing. It was very disappointing to see the Federal Government quitting projects of importance such as the Great Western Highway and other important projects. The State Government needs to direct more funding to regional NSW. The Resources for Regions needs to be allocated extra resources. Councils have spent large amounts of money for funding applications. The Opposition will fight for the programs introduced by the Coalition Government that have been abandoned to be reintroduced.



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Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations

The Hon Damien Tudehope



The Country Mayors Association is a united advocacy group and the opposition appreciates its input. As a previous Minister for small business during the drought periods in 2019-2021 he travelled extensively in regional and rural NSW and worked with the communities. Drought has a continuing affect on small communities due to lack of spending. As a government they invested heavily in regional NSW as a way of creating jobs and renewing the economy. In the last two weeks the Federal Government has shown it has little idea on how to stimulate the economy announcing the cutting of funding drastically of projects that will affect local government. How does the State Government plan when the Commonwealth does not involve them in the discussions. This will have a continuing impact on local communities. Regional NSW will be left behind and regional communities should not have an unfair reduction because of this. A lot of work is being done with renewable energy zones but communities are not being consulted.

Shadow Minister for Water and Crown Lands

The Hon Steph Cooke



The Shadow Ministers plan was to bring forward projects and concerns with the new Minister with the hope that the Labor Government would pick up where the coalition finished but that has not happened. The Sydney and Hunter Water Act needs amendments to it and the coalition is making representations to the Inquiry. The Coalition is also making representations to the Water Initiative. The Murray Darling Basin Plan has been rewritten to give the Commonwealth more scope to buy back water. The Wyangala Dam wall raising has been axed that would have provided water security and flood mitigation. The Safe and Secure Water Program is a major failure for the regions. With Regional Water Strategies the robustness of the strategies are in doubt. There is a fear that the Government doesn't understand that water is important for growth and security. The Coalition would like to work with Country Mayors members to identify what are the top three water security areas of each council.



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President of LGNSW – Darriea Turley AM

Chairman of Country Mayors Association of NSW – Jamie Chaffey



Out going CMA Executive member

Cr John Medcalf OAM





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**Out going CMA Secretariat
Allan Burgess**



**Thank you Allan for your 14 years of Service to the
Country Mayors Association of NSW**

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

www.nswcountrymayors.com.au