



## MAYORAL REPORT

11<sup>th</sup> April 2006

**MM1 SYDNEY MEETINGS**  
**FILE: 344 / 118 JACH {Folio No. \*}**

### SUMMARY:

To outline details of meetings attended in Sydney on Friday, 17th March 2006.



### DESCRIPTION:

The General Manager and I attended the Country Mayors and Pacific Highway Taskforce meetings in Sydney on Friday, 17th March.

Country Mayors was addressed by Ms Victoria Keighery, CEO Regional Arts NSW and Professor Percy Allan, AM a member of the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of Local Government.

Ms Keighery outlined the mission of Regional Arts to enhance and foster the capacity of regional communities for sustainable self determined culture development. They do that through advocacy and the provision of services and programs in response to identified needs in collaboration with individuals, community organisations, government and other agencies at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Ms Keighery stressed the importance of the assistance received from Local Government and that Regional Arts would not survive without it.

Professor Percy Allan outlined the methodology and findings of the interim report, "Are Council's sustainable". Local Government is in financial crisis but so to is the State Government. Local Government funding needs to be freed up but it is up to Local Government itself to change what services it provides and how those services are to be provided and to introduce systems that properly reflect each Council's financial position.

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The meeting also passed resolutions opposing the amendments to the EP & A Act currently before parliament that would allow the Government to take over assessment processes and is opposing the recent payroll tax relief announcement which will favour Sydney at the expense of regional Australia.

The Pacific Highway Taskforce was addressed by Bob Higgins from the RTA. \$960 million has been allocated by both the State and Commonwealth Governments for capital improvement of Pacific Highway for the 2006 / 07, 2007 / 08 and 2008 / 09 years. These funds are to be expended on: -

- Karuah to Bulahdelah
- Bulahdelah bypass
- Coopernook to Moorland
- Bonville Deviation
- Sapphire to Woolgoolga
- Ballina bypass
- Bonora Point deviation

Projects planed beyond 2009 are: -

- Macksville to Urunga
- Kempsey to Eungai
- Moorland to Herons Creek

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the State and Federal Governments to explore options to accelerate completion. Both governments are committed to providing between \$220 million to \$320 million per year. Funding options being investigated include Toll Roads.

## **REPORT IMPLICATIONS:**

- ***Environmental***

***Nil***

- ***Social***

***Nil***

- ***Economic (Financial)***

***Nil***

- ***Policy or Statutory***

***Nil***

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the information be noted.**

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**J A C Hayes**  
**MAYOR**