



MAYORAL REPORT

12th September 2006

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| MM1 | MID NORTH COAST GROUP OF COUNCILS |
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SUMMARY:

To give an outline of proceedings of the Group meetings held on the 11th August 2006 and 23rd August 2006.



DESCRIPTION:

The Mid North Coast Group of Councils held their quarterly meeting at Port Macquarie Hastings Council on the 11 August. The meeting was attended by the General Manager and myself.

The Minister for Local Government was invited and attended the meeting and an informal dinner the evening before. Prior to the meeting on the 11 August delegates had the opportunity to view the Cultural Centre site and the convict building remains that have been unearthed during excavation. The Centre has been redesigned to include viewing areas of the remains and an interpretive centre.

The Minister attended the whole meeting and outlined his continued support of resource sharing, his fight to have the Financial Assistance Grant Formula changed back to include population in the distribution formula, his commitment to councillor training and the current status of the review of the Companion Animals Act. A lot of time was taken to question the Minister on Regional Planning, Bushfire Legislation, Ministerial Advisory Council, promoting the good things Local Government does and his role as the Local Government Advocate. The Minister has promised to follow up the issues raised and to assist in arranging a meeting with the Minister for Planning, Hon. Frank Sartor.

The meeting was addressed by Julie Byers, The Premiers Department Regional Co-ordinator who spoke on the operation of the Regional Co-ordination Management Group which is a series of senior staff groups, including representative Local Government General Managers, that meet to enhance Government services by co-ordinating service delivery. There were also presentations on the Mid North Coast Group

A - 2

of Councils implementation of Workchoices, and the achievements of the Information Technology Groups with savings through joint purchases of computer equipment and information sharing.

A further meeting of the Group was held on Thursday, 23 August to discuss Policing issues with the Assistant Commissioner and his Area Commanders. In attendance were Assistant Commissioner Mr Peter Parsons his Chief of Staff, Superintendent Peter Thurtell, Inspector Peter McKenna, Local Area commander Paul Fehon, and Superintendent Peter Barrie.

The Assistant Commissioner is in charge of 12 Local Area Commands from the Hawkesbury to the Queensland border and is currently 200 over strength due to requests for additional staff and long term absences through sickness. Forward planning within these commands is based on census information and information from the Department of Planning and Local Government.

A number of operational issues were listed on the agenda for discussion but the solution to all of these issues is increased Police allocation eg. 24 hour Policing required a Police Station to have a manpower complement of 24. Without that there is no possibility of a 24 hour facility. The appropriate use of CCTV was discussed and it was the Polices' view that this method of surveillance was costly to install and there was a need for it to be monitored at least during high risk periods of Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.

The need to act strategically was a major outcome of the meeting. The Police are non-political and can't lobby on behalf of local communities. The question is what can Local Government do for the Police? The meeting has resolved: -

1. *That in the lead up to the election and using the commands forward planning initiative, representations be made to the appropriate Ministers for a strong share of manpower and resources for the Mid North Coast.*
2. *That the Group push the facts relating to community anti-social behaviour.*
3. *That cost sharing be promoted for the provision of CCTV between Local Government, Government and business community's where appropriate.*

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