



## **MAYORAL REPORT**

12<sup>th</sup> September 2006

<b>MM2</b>	<b>SYDNEY MEETINGS</b>
	<b>FILE: 344 COPY 118 JACH</b>

### **SUMMARY:**

To outline the outcomes of the meetings held in Sydney on the 18 August.



### **DESCRIPTION:**

On the 18 August the General Manager and I attended the Country Mayors Association meeting and the Pacific Highway Taskforce meeting in Sydney.

The theme of the Country Mayors Association meeting was Water Management. The meeting was addressed by Mr Mark Duffy, Acting Director General Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability and Mr Ken Matthews, Chairman National Water Commission.

Mr Duffy outlined the significance of the water and waste water sector with Local Government assets of \$10.8 billion dollars, a turnover of \$800 million per annum and with 1.8 million customers.

The Departments role is: -

- Policy Development
- Regulatory functions and
- Country Towns Water Program

The Premier has announced that no town will run out of water and there is a move towards reuse schemes within town boundaries. Demand management is being introduced under integrated water cycle management and utility performance is being benchmarked.

In light of the Leader of the Oppositions announcement that they intend to restore the Country Towns Water Program I emphasised to Mr Duffy the importance of this scheme and the necessity for the Labour Party

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platform to include an expansion of the program. He advised that he would bring it to the Government's attention.

The rumour that the State Government may be interested in taking over water supplies gained some credence with the admission that there is consideration being given to the creation of local water corporations. This is as a result of both Gosford and Wyong Councils wanting to set up a corporation outside of the County Council structure. Mr Duffy did state that any such proposals are voluntary but there was a lot of scepticism about this.

Ken Mathews outlined the National Water Initiative which is designed to consolidate all reports into one document and find a national approach. The success of this initiative relies on Commonwealth/State co-operation. The commitments of the National Water Initiative are:-

- Legislative entitlements
- Complete Plans
- Adoption of National Standards
- Implementation of Performance Benchmarking
- Implementation of Urban Water Demand Management

The challenges for Local Government are:-

- A greater role in water planning
- Determine attitudes to a range of new supply options
- Managing the impacts of water trading
- Emphasis on water sensitive urban design
- Opportunities for access to government funding
- Setting local water use restrictions

The funding for the Pacific Highway over the next three years has been increased from \$960 million to \$1280 million. The current construction program is:-

- Karuah to Buladelah
- Bundaree Creek to Possum Brush

Under tender are the sections:-

- Karuah to Buladelah
- Bonville Deviation
- Ballina By-pass

Other parts of the program are:-

- Karuah to Buladelah
- Buladelah By-pass
- Coopernook to Mooreland
- Mooreland to Herons Creek

The Kempsey to Eungai section is to be constructed beyond 2009. Kempsey is undergoing a Part 3 assessment by the Department of Planning which will take approximately eighteen months and will include the preparation of an EIS. Bob Higgins, Manager Pacific Highway will be updating Council on the 31 August and I am hopeful that he will provide additional information.

**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**