



MAYORAL SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

13th June 2006

MM4	SHIRES CONFERENCE AND LGMA FORUM
SUPP	FILE: 152 JACH {Folio No. *}

SUMMARY:

To provide Councillors with details of the proceedings of the Shires Conference and LGMA Forum held in Sydney.



DESCRIPTION:

The Local Government Managers Australia Forum held on Monday, 5 June was attended by Councillors Bowell, Green, Saul, the General Manager and myself.

The Theme of the Conference was, "Our Local and Global Community Challenges" and the scene was set by the first keynote speaker, Dr John Williams, CSIRO Scientist, Member of the Scientific Think Tank; the Wentworth Group who spoke about the necessity to protect the environment and in particular to manage the Native Vegetation Act and Water Management Act to enable us to be competitive in a future world that will make decisions based on product standards.

Other speakers including Tom Murphy, Chief Executive Officer of the Western Research Institute, Carys Evans Strategic Spatial Analyst Strategic Resources Planning, Victorian Department of Primary Industries and a panel of Economic Development Offices built on the theme over -viewing NSW's likely poor competitiveness compared to other states to benefit from world growth. They gave examples of local economic development initiatives and details of a social and economic sustainability project in Hawkesbury Shire. The Forum was also addressed by the Deputy Director General, Department of Local Government, Ross Woodward, the Valuer General, Phil Weston and Kerry O'Keefe, former test cricketer. A panel session on pecuniary and conflicting interests that included Jerrold Cripps, QC Commissioner ICAC was very informative.

The Shires Association Conference was held on Tuesday, 6 and Wednesday, 7 June. The Conference was addressed by a number of Ministers viz: -

- o Minister for Local Government, Hon Kerry Hickey, MP
- o Federal Minister for Local Government and Territories, Hon Jim Lloyd, MHR
- o Minister for Water Utilities Regional Development and Small Business, Hon David Campbell, MP
- o Minister for Roads, Hon E M Roozendaal
- o Minister for Lands, Rural Affairs, Justice and Emergency Services, Hon Tony Kelly, MLC
- o Minister for Natural Resources, Primary Industries and Mineral Resources, Hon I M MacDonald, MLC
- o Minister for Planning, Hon Frank Sartor, MP
- o Minister for Health, Hon John Hatzistergos, MLC

As well as the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Peter Debnam, MP.

The Conference was also addressed by: -

- Professor Percy Allan, AM
- Clr Paul Bell, AM, President Australian Local Government Association
- Mr Brett Westbrook, CEO Local Government Superannuation Scheme
- Ms Kate Carnell, AO CEO Australia Divisions of General Practice

Kerry Hickey announced the releasing of a Pecuniary Interest Manual and that training for all Councillors will be compulsory from the 2008 election. David Campbell advised that \$70 million dollars was in the 2006/07 budget to upgrade country water and sewerage supplies to be spent on existing priorities; Mr Roozendaal advised that although provision has not been made in the budget to restore the timber bridge program his department will be investigating the issue and Tony Kelly announced that funding has been provided in the 2006/07 budget for the Kempsey Police Station.

Percy Allen gave an overview of the Inquiry into The Financial Sustainability of Local Government in NSW and emphasised that Councils need to restrain operating expenditure and divert resources to existing infrastructure and reduce people services. Local Government needs to borrow \$5.3 billion dollars and repay those loans through increased rates and charges, Council savings and increased grants. Councils should have access to a fixed percentage of Commonwealth Taxation and rate pegging should be abolished.

Paul Bell outlined the activities being undertaken on a national level including inter-governmental agreement on cost shifting, Roads to

Recovery, Study of Local Government Finances and Constitutional Recognition.

In response to the Allen Inquiry Conference resolved: -

- That the Independent Panel be commended on the successful conduct and completion of this watershed Inquiry.
- That the Association express their gratitude for the help and support provided to the Inquiry by councils, ROCs and other stakeholders.
- That the Association commit to an ongoing effort to rebuild and strengthen the financial sustainability of NSW Local Government.
- That the Association build on the opportunity provided by the Final Report and take a leadership role in advancing the NSW Local Government sector.
- That the Association establish an implementation framework and process to consult with councils and other stakeholders; and to advance the key recommendations of the Final Report.
- That the Association note that to implement the report's recommendations it will be necessary to engage with stakeholders and agree that consultation take place with stakeholders including the LGMA, IPWEA, DLG and the Water Directorate.

Endorsement of Report in Principle:

That the Association support the findings and recommendations of the Inquiry in principle and establish a suitably resourced Implementation Task Force as set out below:

LGI Implementation Task Force – Structure/Process For Next Steps:

- a. The Association establish an Implementation Task Force to be responsible for developing strategies, action plans, projects and initiatives to advance the recommendations contained in the Final Report. The Task Force should be established as a matter of priority. The Task Force should represent Local Government's interface with an Independent Commission as envisaged by recommendation 49 of the Final Report.

The Task Force would be chaired by the President of the Associations and comprise representatives of member councils and key local government stakeholders such as DLG and the Presidents of LGMA and IPWEA, and report to the LGSA Joint Committee.

- b. The implementation Task Force will coordinate the establishment of specialist working groups to focus on specific aspects of the report and to support any related projects or initiatives arising. The working groups would comprise – as appropriate – representatives of the Associations, LGMA,

- c. PIWEA, DLG, other stakeholders and other parties deemed to have suitable expertise. It is envisaged that such working groups could include:
 - Infrastructure and Total Asset management;
 - Financial Performance, Position and Governance;
 - Governance and management – Performance, Efficiency and Benchmarking; and
 - Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)
- d. The working groups will report to the Implementation Task Force and be chaired by the organisation/representative agreed to be best placed (resources/expertise) to deal with the subject matter.
- e. The Implementation Task Force is to develop a comprehensive consultation and communications strategy as a first priority. The strategy would encompass the Local Government sector, State and Commonwealth Governments, other stakeholders and the community at large.
- f. That the LGSA allocate an adequate budget to support the Implementation Task Force to ensure that the response to the Inquiry is managed as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- g. The Task Force report back on a six monthly basis.

Council had three motions before the Conference.

"That The Shires Association lobby the State and Commonwealth Governments in relation to the totally inadequate funding levels currently being expended on services for mental health, suicide prevention and health services generally within the state of NSW.

That Local Government provide leadership through endorsement of the creation of community based services for people with mental illness in their jurisdictions and through helping overcome stigma and community resistance to such services."

"That the Shires Association object to the State Government using the Caravan Park Levy Fund for any purpose other than for the development of caravan parks on crown lands and facilities on other crown reserves under the control of Councils."

"That the Shires Association make representations to the Minister for Lands seeking a moratorium to be placed on the Caravan Park Levy scheme for a period of two years."

All motions were adopted by the conference.

The elections for the divisional representatives were uncontested and I remain the "A" Division Representative. Two new representatives were appointed to "H" and "J" Divisions. Clr Paul

Braybrooks remains as the Treasurer and Cllr Bruce Miller and Cllr Barry Johnston were elected the Vice Presidents.

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