



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

14th November 2006

DSS5 2006 NSW LOCAL ROADS CONGRESS
FILE: 165 NJT {Folio No. * }

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the 2006 NSW Local Roads Congress.



DESCRIPTION:

The NSW Roads & Transport Directorate, a partnership of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) and the Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) of NSW, held their 2006 NSW Local Roads Congress in Sydney on 16th and 17th October 2006. Council's delegates at the Congress were Councillor Bob McWilliam and Acting Manager Engineering Strategy, Neil Thomson.

The NSW Local Roads Congress had representation from the Department of Local Government, Local Government Shires Association of NSW, Department of Transport and Regional Services, Institute of Public Works Engineering (IPWEA NSW Division), Roads and Traffic Authority, Australian Trucking Federation, and delegates from a wide section of Local Government Councils throughout NSW. This wide cross-section of participants provided a valuable debate on roads and transport policy on a state-wide basis and to set the framework for developing local government strategies into the future.

A major emphasis at the Congress and specifically outlined by the Deputy Director General of the Department Local Government, highlighted the need for each Council to develop Asset Management Plans, so that meaningful and consistent dialogue can be held with all aspects of road management. The Congress continued to highlight the inadequacy of the present funding arrangements for road infrastructure.

The Congress Communiqué outlining the concerns raised is reprinted below:

All NSW political parties to commit to:

- *Reinstatement of the Regional Roads Timber Bridge program to its previous level in real terms;*
- *Recognition of the importance of the State Government's Regional Road Block Grant funding arrangements, and commitment to a real increase in funding beyond the annual CPI adjustment. And also commit to a one off increase in the Block Grant to cover the difference in the Road Construction and Maintenance Cost Index and the CPI or actual increase in the past 5 years, with the increase in future years being equivalent to the Road Construction and Maintenance Cost Index (as opposed to CPI);*
- *Ensuring that the outcomes of the Regional Road Classification Review are cost neutral to Local Government and that the results of the review be released immediately.*
- *Support for the initiatives undertaken by the Department of Local Government Infrastructure Taskforce in developing an asset management framework for NSW, and continued dialogue with councils and professional organisations to ensure a satisfactory transfer of expertise to the industry.*
- *Support for the LGSA Strengthening Local Government Taskforce and calls on all councils and the NSW Government to implement the findings of the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government.*
- *Request that the NSW Government implement recommendation No.9 of the Independent Inquiry and assume responsibility for all regional roads in rural shires.*
- *Calls on all councils in NSW to develop long term infrastructure management plans and 10 year financial plans, and seeks the State and Federal Governments to commit to financial assistance to facilitate implementation of the asset renewal demands within those plans.*
- *Any changes to heavy vehicle access arrangements such as those covered by Higher Mass Limits and Performance Based Standards are introduced only after:*
 - *appropriate consultation with Local Government;*
 - *the development of comprehensive route assessment guidelines; and*

- *arrangements for compensation for damage to local road networks.*
- *The Commonwealth Government to urgently review the quantum of road funding provided to NSW Councils as Financial Assistance Grants in order to address the funding gap of \$718 million p.a. as established by the Roads and Transport Directorate Road Asset Benchmarking Project with data provided by 135 councils.*
- *Support for the concept/proposal for a North/South inland rail corridor from Melbourne to Brisbane and urges the Federal Government to commit to the proposal.*
- *Support for the review of the NSW Roads Act 1993 such that the RTA is the Roads Authority for highways.*

It is considered that by the continued support of the IPWEA (NSW) Roads and Transport Directorate, and the initiatives agreed to at the Congress, Councillors and staff will have access to a powerful lobby group as well as a consulting resource that will improve efficiency, avoid duplication and lead the way in NSW towards an integrated approach to asset management.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Nil.

- ***Social***

Nil.

- ***Economic (Financial)***

Nil.

- ***Policy or Statutory***

There are no policy or statutory implications.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be noted.

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A P Vermeulen
DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES