



Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Ken Keith OAM
PO Box 337 Parkes NSW 2870
02 6861 2333
ABN 92 803 490 533

MINUTES

RURAL HEALTH FORUM

FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2022 AUDITORIUM, CLUB YORK, SYDNEY

The meeting opened at 1.06 p.m.

1. ATTENDANCE:

Armidale Regional Council, Mayor, Cr Sam Coupland, Mayor
Armidale Regional Council, Mr James Roncon, General Manager
Bathurst Regional Council, Cr Robert Taylor, Mayor
Bathurst Regional Council, Mr David Sherley, General Manager
Bega Valley Shire Council, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Mayor
Bega Valley Shire Council, Mr Anthony McMahon, Acting CEO
Berrigan Shire Council, Cr Matthew Hannan, Mayor
Bland Shire Council, Mr Ray Smith, General Manager
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor
Cabonne Shire Council, Mr Brad Burns, General Manager
Coolamon Shire Council, Cr David McCann, Mayor
Coolamon Shire Council, Mr Tony Donoghue, General Manager
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Charlie Sheahan, Mayor
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Glen McAtear, Acting Deputy General Manager
Cowra Shire Council, Cr Bill West, Mayor
Cowra Shire Council, Cr Ruth Fagan
Cowra Shire Council, Mr Paul Devery, General Manager
Edward River Council, Cr Peta Betts, Mayor
Edward River Council, Mr Phil Stone, General Manager
Federation Council, Cr Patrick Bourke, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Bob Peter Walker, Mayor
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Mr Matt O'Rourke, Acting General Manager
Griffith City Council, Cr John Doug Curran, Mayor
Gunnedah Shire Council, Cr Jamie Chaffey, Mayor
Gunnedah Shire Council, Mr Eric Growth, General Manager
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr John Coulton, Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council, Mr Max Eastcott, General Manager

Gwydir Shire Council, Cr Catherine Egan, Deputy Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr Tiffany Galvin
Gwydir Shire Council, Mrs Leeah Daley
Gwydir Shire Council, Mrs Carmen Southwell
Hay Shire Council, Cr Carol Oataway, Mayor
Hay Shire Council, Mr David Webb, General Manager
Inverell Shire Council, Cr Paul Harmon, Mayor
Kempsey Shire Council, Cr Leo Hauville, Mayor
Kempsey Shire Council, Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager
Kiama Municipal Council, Cr Neil Reilly, Mayor
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Tony Reneker, Mayor
Leeton Shire Council, Ms Jackie Kruger, General Manager
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Cr Doug Hawkins, Mayor
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Ms Joanna Sangster, General Manager
Mid Western/Mudgee Regional Council, Mr Brad Cam, General Manager
Moree Plains Shire Council, Mr Nick Tobin, Acting General Manager
Narrandera Shire Council, Cr Neville Kschenka, Mayor
Narrandera Shire Council, Mr George Cowan, General Manager
Oberon Council, Cr Mark Kellam, Mayor
Oberon Council, Mr Gary Wallace, General Manager
Orange City Council, Cr Jason Hamling, Mayor
Orange City Council, Mr Dave Wadell, General Manager
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor
Tamworth Regional Council, Cr Judy Coates
Temora Shire Council, Mr Gary Lavelle, General Manager
Tenterfield Shire Council, Cr Bronwyn Petrie, Mayor
Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Cr Pam Kensit, Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Cr Bob Crouch, Deputy Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Ms Kate Jessop, General Manager
Warren Shire Council, Mr Gary Woodman, General Manager
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Ambrose Doolan, Mayor
LGNSW, Mr Scott Phillips, CEO
ALGA, Cr Linda Scott, President

APOLOGIES:

As submitted

To consider the recommendations of the Legislative Council report into “Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales”

Welcome and Introduction of Proceedings, Cr Ken Keith OAM, Chairman, Country Mayors Association of NSW

The Chairman welcomed members of CMA which advocates, for health services in rural NSW. It was Country Mayors that lobbied the State Government to establish a Ministry of Regional Health. The purpose of the forum is to guide a discussion and solutions for rural health in NSW. We need to get both Commonwealth and State Governments to pursue a new policy direction.

Cr Jamie Chaffey, Deputy Chairman, Country Mayors Association of NSW, Rural Health a Local Government Perspective

The Country Mayors Association is demanding change and acknowledges the Inquiry and all those that participated in it. Politics has to be removed from the equation. There should be no divide between metropolitan and rural NSW. The Ministry of Regional Health has been established because of Country Mayors. The Inquiry is the first to identify the shortcomings of rural health in NSW. There is an election due in NSW in the next 10 months and swift action is required. There were 720 submissions to the Inquiry which identified poorer health outcomes in rural NSW compared to metropolitan areas. There are significant poorer outcomes and poorer substandard and levels of care. It is a complicated issue but action will save lives. Country Mayors calls on the implementation of all recommendations. Cr Chaffey outlined the issues affecting the Gunnedah community.

The Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC, Minister for women, Minister for Regional Health, Minister for Mental Health

The Minister is a registered nurse who practiced in rural NSW. The Minister thanked those that had the courage to come forward. 95% of patients admitted to rural hospitals had a good experience. That is not to say there aren't problems. We need to concentrate on those concerns. The best outcomes for mental health is to keep the patients in their communities. We haven't included Local Government in our conversations. Aged care support is a commitment of the new Federal Government. Driving hundreds of kilometers to see their loved ones is unacceptable. The State Government has established a Division of Regional Health and a Coordinator. There will be designated staff to consider problems as they arise. In respect of Telehealth and visual care the Minister does not believe virtual care should replace face to face consultation. There are benefits of Telehealth such as of lesser driving to appointments. The Government will not impose models of care that the communities do not want. Different levels of salaries to staff doing the same job causes discontent. 5,000 nurses per year are coming through the system. The doctors issue is a big issue. We are losing a lot of doctors as they are not supported as much as they should. A new medical school has been established at CSU. The Government has to address the recommendations of the Inquiry and the Government will respond before the six months timeline. We face enormous challenges and we will not walk away from them

Mr Ryan Park MP, Shadow Minister for Health and Mental Health

The Shadow Minister plans to approach the new National Cabinet with the outcomes of the Inquiry. He became Shadow minister for Health 3 years ago and after meeting practitioners from Far Western NSW he has tried to initiate change. The Inquiry had 720 submissions had 22 findings and 44 recommendations. There are a lot of good things that have happened but the Government needs to acknowledge a lot more needs to be done. The recommendations have not missed the mark and having a Minister for Regional Health is a good thing. There has not been a focus in the past at a bureaucratic level. We have agreed to implement the recommendations and there needs to be a report to each session of parliament on the implementation of the recommendations. Some people who made submissions took a risk to come forward. There needs to be more State responsibility for rural health and there needs to be regular input from the National Council. NSW needs to get better as there is a bureaucratic culture of secrecy. Boards are distant from their communities. There needs to be an opportunity for health workers to come forward with their concerns.

Mr Richard Colbran, Chief Executive Officer, Rural Doctors Network NSW

The Network was established in 1988 and accesses communities, workforce organisations and the sector. Focuses and challenges are access service models, chronic disease

prevention, available hospitals preservations, workforce retention, recruitment, future workforce pathways and immersion, regions of choice campaigns, practice and NGO viability, remuneration advocacy, education, and engagement in workforce planning. What's working is well planned and tracked long term localized health models, workforce acknowledgement, rural health advocacy, practice and service system standards, future workforce programs, coordination of natural disaster responses and multi agency recruitment. What we can do together is joint rural health advocacy, LGA or town based health system and workforce plans, rural workforce campaigns, immersion programs and recruitment

Adjunct Professor, Ruth Stewart, National Rural Health Commissioner for Australia

Ruth Stewart has spent 30 years as a rural GP. At the time of the Medicare freeze GP's were the predominant provider for primary health care but now it is specialist providers. Rural communities need rural generalists. There are far fewer doctors per head of population in remote and rural communities. GP's in these communities are not doing General Practice work. Patient experience is that there are improved numbers in specialists but declining numbers in GP's. The economic drivers of medical care are financial incentives, Medicare indexation freeze, and ineffective retention grants. To rural proof the workforce metropolitan students with metropolitan internship only 12% become rural doctors. Non metro students with non metropolitan internship significant numbers stay in a non metropolitan practice.

Where to from here for Regional and Rural Health – Suggestions for positive change

Issues that need to be considered by Country Mayors are

- (1) Local Health Districts need to introduce measures to hold on to internees
- (2) Develop a system to get overseas doctors into are communities (Leeton)
- (3) Support UNE, CSU, and SCU to establish new medical schools (Uralla)
- (4) Investigate administration and boundaries of Health Districts (Tenterfield)
- (5) Have Primary Care nurses connected to hospitals (Tamworth)
- (6) Indigenous Training of indigenous people for their communities (Parkes)
- (7) Advocacy approach and strategy to be developed by Country Mayors (Richard Colbran)
- (8) Ensure the State Government reports on the progress of the Inquiry (Richard Colbran)
- (9) The Commonwealth Government to explain what they are doing in respect of the Inquiry (Richard Colbran)
- (10) Thank those that have worked hard under a difficult situation (Richard Colbran)
- (11) Councils build health plans (Richard Colbran)
- (12) The issue is workforce. Where is the workforce and where do you get it (Richard Colbran)
- (13) Travel allowances to be simplified (Richard Colbran)
- (14) Need bipartisan support of the 44 recommendations and continuation of Minister for Regional Health
- (15) Reestablish Hospital Boards (Hay)

There being no further business the Forum closed at 5.17pm.

Cr Ken Keith OAM
Chairman Country Mayor's Association of NSW



Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Ken Keith OAM
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MINUTES

GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, 27 MAY 2022 AUDITORIUM, CLUB YORK, SYDNEY

The meeting opened at 8.35 a.m.

1. ATTENDANCE:

Armidale Regional Council, Mayor, Cr Sam Coupland, Mayor
Armidale Regional Council, Mr James Roncon, General Manager
Ballina Shire Council, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Mayor
Bathurst Regional Council, Cr Robert Taylor, Mayor
Bathurst Regional Council, Mr David Sherley, General Manager
Bega Valley Shire Council, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Mayor
Bega Valley Shire Council, Mr Anthony McMahon, CEO
Berrigan Shire Council, Cr Matthew Hannan, Mayor
Berrigan Shire Council, Mr Matt Hansen, Deputy CEO
Bland Shire Council, Mr Ray Smith, General Manager
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor
Cabonne Shire Council, Mr Brad Burns, General Manager
Coolamon Shire Council, Cr David McCann, Mayor
Coolamon Shire Council, Mr Tony Donoghue, General Manager
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Charlie Sheahan, Mayor
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Glen Atear, Acting Deputy General Manager
Cowra Shire Council, Cr Bill West, Mayor
Cowra Shire Council, Mr Paul Devery, General Manager
Dubbo Regional Council, Cr Mathew Dickerson, Mayor
Dubbo Regional Council, Mr Murray Wood, General Manager
Edward River Council, Cr Peta Betts, Mayor
Edward River Council, Mr Phil Stone, General Manager
Federation Council, Cr Patrick Bourke, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager
Glen Innes Shire Council, Cr Rod Banham, Mayor
Glen Innes Shire Council, Mr Craig Bennett, General Manager
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Bob Peter Walker, Mayor

Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Mr Matt O'Rourke, Acting General Manager
Griffith City Council, Cr John Doug Curran, Mayor
Griffith City Council, Mr Brett Stonestreet, General Manager
Gunnedah Shire Council, Cr Jamie Chaffey, Mayor
Gunnedah Shire Council, Mr Eric Growth, General Manager
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr John Coulton, Mayor
Gwydir Shire Council, Mr Max Eastcott, General Manager
Gwydir Shire Council, Cr Catherine Egan, Deputy Mayor
Hay Shire Council, Cr Carol Oataway, Mayor
Hay Shire Council, Mr David Webb, General Manager
Inverell Shire Council, Cr Paul Harmon, Mayor
Kempsey Shire Council, Cr Leo Hauville, Mayor
Kempsey Shire Council, Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager
Kiama Municipal Council, Cr Neil Reilly, Mayor
Kiama Municipal Council, Ms Jane Stroud, CEO
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Tony Reneker, Mayor
Leeton Shire Council, Ms Jackie Kruger, General Manager
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Cr Doug Hawkins, Mayor
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Ms Joanna Sangster, General Manager
Mid-Western/Mudgee Regional Council, Mr Brad Cam, General Manager
Moree Plains Shire Council, Cr Mark Johnson, Mayor
Moree Plains Shire Council, Mr Nick Tobin, Acting General Manager
Murray River Council, Mr Terry Dodds, General Manager
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Ron Campbell, Mayor
Narrandera Shire Council, Cr Neville Schenka, Mayor
Narrandera Shire Council, Mr George Cowan, General Manager
Oberon Council, Cr Mark Kellam, Mayor
Oberon Council, Mr Gary Wallace, General Manager
Orange City Council, Cr Jason Hamling, Mayor
Orange City Council, Mr Dave Waddell, General Manager
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor
Singleton Council, Cr Sue Moore, Mayor
Singleton Council, Jason Linnane, General Manager
Temora Shire Council, Mr Gary Lavelle, General Manager
Tenterfield Shire Council, Cr Bronwyn Petrie, Mayor
Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Cr Pam Kensit, Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Bob Crouch, Deputy Mayor
Uralla Shire Council, Ms Kate Jessep, General Manager
Warren Shire Council, Cr Milton Quigley, Mayor
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Ambrose Doolan, Mayor
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Mr Roger Bailey, General Manager
LGNSW, Mr Scott Phillips, CEO
ALGA Cr Linda Scott, President
Office of Local Government, Melissa Gibbs, Director Policy and Sector Development

APOLOGIES:

As submitted

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Cr Linda Scott, President, ALGA

The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP, Minister for Local Government

The Hon Paul Toole MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales,
Minister for Police

The Hon Kevin Anderson MP, Minister for Lands and Water, Minister for Hospitality
and Racing

Mr Scott Phillips, CEO, LGNSW

Ms Anna Bowen, Head of Social Impact, Royal Far West

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 11 March 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record (Inverell Shire Council / Warrumbungle Shire Council).

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Nil

4. Cr Linda Scott, President, ALGA

Cr Scott thanked councils for campaigning Local Government issues in the recent Federal election. The change in government is working to ensure commitments are met and that Labor Party policy is implemented. ALGA has secured commitments for fair funding of Federal Assistance Grants, the Commonwealth Government will match the \$500 million coalition extension to the \$2.5billion Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program and invest a further \$250million, it will provide \$200million for disaster mitigation funding which will be based on application, will provide \$400million for mobile phone coverage in rural and regional areas and to return Local Government to the National Cabinet. ALGA's advocacy priorities are a climate change partnership, affordable housing partnership and circular economy waste innovation and reduction.

5. Health Forum

RESOLVED

1. That following the Country Mayors Health Forum, Country Mayors write to the Premier and Opposition leader thanking them for their representation at the forum through the Minister for Regional Health the Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC and the Shadow Minister for Health Ryan Park and recognise their bipartisan commitment to agreeing to address the rural and regional health issue across regional NSW

2. That Country Mayors seek commitment from the Premier and the leader of the Opposition to implement the recommendations of the Legislative Council Inquiry into the Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote New South Wales

3. That the Country Mayors Executive Committee develop a further set of targeted health related priorities to advocate to both State and Federal Governments to address (Bega Valley Shire Council / Gunnedah Shire Council)

6. The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP, Minister for Local Government

The Minister is pleased to have been appointed and wants to be a strong advocate for Local Government. She has discussed the 2022/23 rate variation with IPART and was able to get the variation resolved. There are challenges with the Environmental Services Levy but additional resources have been provided and additional funding has been pushed through for increased costs incurred by councils. The government has supported flood affected communities in northern NSW and has introduced a support program for skills for councils most in need. The OLG priorities are Sustainability and an IPART review. Some councils are not sustainable and there is a need to get those councils to be able to provide services to their communities. The Minister does not want the Office of Local Government reduced down to small numbers. A conduct review is to take place as there are a number of issues around the State. Joint Organisations are calling for more resourcing and a consultation process is to commence shortly.

7. The Hon Paul Toole MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Police

If regional NSW is going well then NSW is going well. The Minister wants to knock on the doors of the new Commonwealth Ministers to make sure regional and rural NSW is not forgotten. He will stand up for rural NSW. The Minister wants communities first and wants a government that responds to emergencies. Regional NSW has become a great place to live and government investment has transformed communities. Lots of projects are being undertaken not only large but also small such as overtaking lanes and the replacement of timber bridges. Regional Growth is funding 2700 projects across the State. Improved facilities support other services such as tourism and recreation opportunities. The Regional Job Creation Fund is creating 7,000 jobs in regional NSW, and Resources for Regions is supporting communities affected by mining, while connectivity for phone coverage although not a State responsibility is being supported by the government. Policing was a role he took on because additional police are required in rural NSW and he wants to ensure that it gets its fair share of police resources. The State government wants to work with Local Government and wants to do projects in partnership with Local Government

8. The Hon Kevin Anderson MP, Minister for Lands and Water, Minister for Hospitality and Racing

The Minister can understand the frustration with dealing with government departments and invites us to contact his office if there is frustration in cutting through the red tape. There are 233 Safe and Secure water projects that are being undertaken. The State has gone from running out of water to a plentiful supply causing different challenging issues. The Water Efficiency Program fixes leaks. The Crown Reserve Improvement Fund has an additional \$7million. There is \$29million available for improvements to racetracks and \$72million for showground maintenance upgrades. Crown land needs to be unlocked for social and affordable housing. The Department can work with land claims at a local level and it is open to working with them.

9. Mr Scott Phillips, CEO, LGNSW

Mr Phillips provided a report on the work of LGNSW since the last meeting on advocacy priorities and updates including Domestic Waste Management Charges Review, Emergency Services Levy and Rural fire Service Assets, ePlanning and NSW Planning Survey, and Housing and outlined advocacy wins such as the 2022-2023 rate peg determination, extra finance to cover the ESL increase for 2022-23, the new report on rural, regional and remote health crisis, the parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of elections held under COVID-19 conditions, flood relief for councils and funding for modular housing package for flood affected communities

10. CORRESPONDENCE

Outward

- (a) The Hon Sam Farraway MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads thanking him for his presentation to the 11 March 2022 meeting
- (b) Mr Simon Hunter, Executive Director Strategy and innovation, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, thanking him for his presentation to the 11 March meeting 2022
- (c) The Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, Premier, inviting him to present at the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (d) The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP, Minister for Local Government, regarding the inclusion of RFS Assets in a council balance sheet
- (e) The Hon Kevin Anderson MP, Minister for Lands and Water, and Minister for Hospitality and Racing inviting him to present at the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (f) The Hon Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Planning and Minister for Homes, following up the Associations letter to Minister Stokes regarding employment zones
- (g) The Hon Paul Toole MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional NSW and Minister for Police, inviting him to present at the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (h) The Hon James Griffin MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage regarding impacts on rural NSW by the Bio Diversity Offset Scheme
- (i) The Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC, Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health and Minister for Mental Health, regarding the holding of a Rural Health Forum

Inward

- (a) Ms Ally Dench, Executive Director, Local Government, Office of Local Government NSW, regarding Joint Organisations and the Rural Council Model
- (b) Cr Rick Firman OAM, Chairman, Riverina JO, regarding the IPART Peg Methodology
- (c) El Smith, Director of Administration and Finance, Temora Shire Council, regarding the IPART Peg Methodology

NOTED

11. FINANCIAL REPORT

RESOLVED That the financial reports for the last quarter were tabled and accepted (Gunnedah Shire Council / Leeton Shire Council)

12. Ms Anna Bowen, Head of Social Impact, Royal Far West

Royal Far West has a long history with rural NSW and although based in Sydney many staff are from country areas. Rural communities are doing it tough and rural children are worse off developmentally than their city counterparts due to environmental and social reasons. Royal Far West provides 750 children with pediatric services, it has a bushfire program and a flood intervention program. They are getting smarter and more effective in recognizing what works. The royal far west is affected by the workforce shortage so are backing that up with telehealth.

13 Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021

RESOLVED that Country Mayors seek to meet with the NSW Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Planning to seek an urgent amendment to the Environmental Planning and Assess (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021 (Murray River Council / Tenterfield Shire Council)

14. New Commonwealth Government Programs

RESOLVED That Country Mayors requests that the new Commonwealth Government commit to or enhance the Local Governments programs of the previous government (Armidale Regional Council /Bega Valley Shire Council)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.05pm.

Cr Ken Keith OAM
Chairman Country Mayor's Association of NSW