



# 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 SKILLS FORUM

THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2022 AUDITORIUM, CLUB YORK, SYDNEY

The Forum opened at 12.50pm.

#### 1. ATTENDANCE:

Ballina Shire Council, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Mayor  
Bathurst Regional Council, Cr Robert Taylor, Mayor  
Bathurst Regional Council, Mr Aaron Jones, Acting General Manager  
Bega Valley Shire Council, Mr Anthony McMahon, CEO  
Blayney Shire Council, Cr Scott Ferguson, Mayor  
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Charlie Sheahan, Mayor  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Glen Atear, Deputy General Manager  
Dubbo Regional Council, Cr Mathew, Mayor  
Dubbo Regional Council, Mr Murray Wood, CEO  
Federation Council, Cr Patrick Bourke, Mayor  
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor  
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager  
Gilgandra Shire Council, Cr Doug Batten, Mayor  
Glen Innes Shire Council, Cr Rod Banham, Mayor  
Glen Innes Shire Council, Mr Dennis McIntyre, Acting General Manager  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Bob Peter Walker, Mayor  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Mr Aaron Johansson, CEO  
Gunnedah Shire Council, Cr Jamie Chaffey, Mayor  
Hilltops Council, Cr Margaret Roles, Mayor  
Kiama Municipal Council, Cr Neil Reilly, Mayor  
Kiama Municipal Council, Ms Jane Stroud, General Manager  
Kyogle Council, Cr Kylie Thomas, Mayor  
Lachlan Shire Council, Cr John Medcalf, Mayor  
Lachlan Shire Council, Mr Greg Tory, General Manager  
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Tony Reneker, Mayor  
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Cr Doug Hawkins, Mayor  
Lockhart Shire Council, Cr Greg Verdon, Mayor

Lockhart Shire Council, Mr Peter Veneris, General Manager  
Moree Plains Shire Council, Cr Mark Johnson, Mayor  
Moree Plains Shire Council, Mr Mike Tobin, Acting General Manager  
Murray River Council, Mr Terry Dodds, General Manager  
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Ron Campbell, Mayor  
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Catherine Redding, Deputy Mayor  
Narrabri Shire Council, Ms Gillian Goddard, Small Business Liason Officer  
Narrandera Shire Council, Cr Neville Schenka, Mayor  
Narromine Shire Council, Cr Craig Davies, Mayor  
Oberon Council, Cr Mark Kellam, Mayor  
Oberon Council, Mr Gary Wallace, General Manager  
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor  
Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Cr Narelle Davis, Mayor  
Tamworth Regional Council, Cr Russell Webb, Mayor  
Tamworth Regional Council, Mr Paul Bennett, General Manager  
Temora Shire Council, Cr Rick Firman, Mayor  
Temora Shire Council, Mrs Elizabeth Smith, Director Administration and Finance  
Uralla Shire Council, Cr Robert Crouch, Deputy Mayor  
Wagga Wagga City Council, Cr Dallas Tout, Mayor  
Wagga Wagga City Council, Mr Peter Thompson, General Manager  
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Ambrose Doolan, Mayor  
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Mr Roger Bailey, General Manager  
Weddin Shire Council, Cr Craig Bembrick, Mayor  
Weddin Shire Council, Ms Noreen Vu, General Manager  
To attract skilled labour  
Wingecarribee Shire Council, Ms Lisa Miscamble, General Manager  
LGNSW, Cr Darriea Turley, President  
LGNSW, Mr Scott Phillips, CEO  
Cr Jacob Cass Country Universities Centre

#### **APOLOGIES:**

As submitted

#### **Welcome and Introduction of proceedings Cr Ken Keith OAM, Chairman, Country Mayors Association of NSW**

Today's Forum evolved out of the Association members review of priority issues. Australia has dropped the ball on education and skills over the past 10 years and have created huge issues for rural NSW. With rate pegging councils do not have the resources and are unable to increase wages to compete for staff. Added to that in Parkes staff are being poached by government and the mining industry. Parkes Shire is working with the regional growth Development Corporation to develop a strategy to attract and retain skilled labour. There has been a dramatic reduction in the development of TAFE courses over the past five years. Course enrollments since 2016 have decreased on average by 12.7% although post COVID there has been a modest recovery. Only 29% of people enrolled in courses in 2021 completed their course. One of the main problems is the lack of apprenticeships and traineeships in rural towns.

### **Hon Fiona Nash, National Commissioner for Rural Education**

The former government appointed her to the role of Commissioner last year and it is the first time there has been a national focus on Education and skills. As Commissioner she also looks at the workforce and how it is impacted. The role is diverse but is not involved in funding but giving advice to government on solutions to challenges. Solutions come from the ground up. There is a need to address workforce shortage on a local basis. Skills retention is a major focus and there hasn't been enough focus on how to grow workforces regionally. Access to education through schools and TAFE is very important. There needs to be better success to career advice. Access to childcare is a barrier. There is a disparity between the city and country across the board a country student is less likely to get a degree or complete higher education. There is a role for councils to connect with people leaving country communities and wanting to come back.

### **Hon Alister Henskens, Minister for Skills and Training**

NSW has the most skilled workforce in Australia and delivered a major investment in fee free training. Delivery and opportunities are more than ever with \$3.1 billion provided in the budget for skills and training. The labour shortage is causing many problems. If you don't have people to train that is a major problem. There is provision in the budget for \$80 million over four years for additional fee for free places to be provided. There is a roll out of pathway programs in regional areas with programs in 144 schools throughout the state providing workplace placements as well as training at the high school level. The restriction that only one vocational subject could be a HSC subject has been removed. \$2 billion has been allocated for TAFE including a large capital investment. NSW is training 45% of all TAFE students in Australia and NSW has the largest take up in regional Australia. Councils across NSW will take time to rebuild flood affected areas and the Government is introducing flood specific courses at TAFE to increase skill needs. There is also other skills work with emergency services and with emergency management courses. Asbestos affected courses in flood areas are also being introduced.

### **Mr Tim Crakanthorp, Shadow Minister for Skills and TAFE, Shadow Minister for Tertiary Education**

The economy is dependent on skilled migration which stopped due to COVID. TAFE enrollments have dropped. COVID had shortages but when it stopped job opportunities increased. Past cuts in skills and education budgets have caused downturn but increased budgets does not fix everything. The new Federal Government has a good skills and education policy. Now the 1 in 10 workers in construction has to be a cadet or trainee. Additional budget to skills and education has been promised. One aspect that has been overlooked is the formation of a national body that addresses skills and education needs throughout Australia. NSW Labor wants to revive the manufacturing sector which will create jobs. Completion rates at TAFE are not high. The purpose of educating is to get people into jobs but on-line education has pros and cons as connections are not good enough and many families do not have the technology. Courses have been reconstructed because of this. TAFE courses are being cancelled and rap around courses lost which is not logical. Courses have to be aligned. NSW Labor will ensure that 50% of railway

stock is produced in the State and will increase tender wages. We will establish a Job First Commission and will be taking on the recommendations of the McKell Institute. Labor wants to get students into training and have a skilled workforce. TAFE needs to be rebuilt to provide courses that students want. Labor invites Country Mayors to provide input into their future plans and policies.

**Mr Edward Cavanagh, Director of Policy, McKell Institute**

The McKell Institute is a research body that works with Government and Business to generate skill changes in communities. Their current project involves data input to identify what problems are being experienced in retaining and attracting skills to regional and rural communities. Generally communities identify their own problem areas but they are rarely solved. The project is about providing jobs in country areas and looking at the broad structural issues that affect the skills shortage in country areas. Migration to rural NSW has created new problems. The Institute is working with the University of Wollongong detailing community market trends and then build up a Local Government area database. The Institute wants to analyse all of the issues highlighted and they need councils to take the statistical realities to government. Its local solutions for local problems. The Institute wants councils to add to it with powerful stories and they will visit those communities as part of their field work in October and November this year. The results can be used in the State election context.

**Cr Jacob Cass, Centre Manager, Parkes Country Universities Centre**

The Country Universities model is a wide one and started in Cooma in 2013 to create opportunities for youth and encourage local high value jobs. The model has grown throughout the State and is a study space that provides high speed internet shared with other students and connects students with technology. It has a people centric focus. It is community owned and governed and funded by the three levels of government. The centres have several partnerships including cornerstone universities and industry support. 1462 students are registered across three states and 48% of students are first in their families to study. Students can study through any university and in fact they study through 140 different institutions. Most students are in the 20-44 years age bracket. The centres support learning and have academic and administration assistance. Pathways include tertiary education, traineeships, and apprenticeships. Parkes Young Professionals is a network of young professionals who can share experiences. Partnerships include universities, government, local business, schools, industry and community and the Parkes Business Innovation Hub is a 20 seat meeting room with video conferencing.

**Cr Rick Firman Chairman and Julie Briggs CEO Riverina Joint Organisation to outline Riverina's Development Skills Shortages Project**

The Riverina Workforce Development project has focus areas and works towards a regional workforce and an employer of choice. Four strands of activities cover high school students and university students. The career journey is professional placements, connectivity, a graduate program and "Start Yourselfes". "Start Yourselfes" involves start

your career here with work inspirational days, meetings between schools and council, resource materials, project officer support, work experience and a better understanding of councils. There are “Come and Try” days over a three day period. Come and try Civil Engineering, Civil Construction, Mapping/GIS, Horticulture and Town Planning and Building. There is professional placement with Charles Stuart University and Wollongong University, and credited placements and voluntary placements offered in any area of Councils operations. There is a student ambassador that showcases diversity at work. There are graduate programs aligned to specific purposes and a fast tracked pathway. That does not guarantee work. Challenges include council resourcing, finding enough placements, finding graduate placements, costs associated with “Come and Try” days, and the importance of partnerships like “Compact”

### **Suggestions for positive change**

- Community service obligation allows for reduction in numbers in rural and remote LGA’s based on the already established community service obligation that TAFE is committed to with flexibility of numbers for specific courses in communities
- That TAFE NSW specifically isolate metropolitan from regional, rural and remote in all areas like student courses, enrollments, completions, apprenticeships and traineeships and funding distribution
- TAFE NSW to deliver a more detailed and transparent annual report that highlights performance and outcomes for each LGA and when it distinguishes from metro and regionals to include industry profiles
- That the HECS debt mechanism be used as a catalyst to support and improve councils currently struggling to attract and retain skilled staff
- Identify what type of courses are undertaken in LGA’s that involve face to face tuition
- More support and incentive for local business to train trainees
- Encourage the State Government to train their own trainees and apprentices
- Engage with the Minister and his advisors to promote and discuss problems facing regional and rural NSW
- Advocate for the aged workforce to return to the workforce and provide training and mentoring
- Reduce competition between the States for the skilled workforce
- The McKell Institute be supported by CMA in its endeavors to increase skills and to retain skills in country NSW

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.05pm.

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



# Country Mayors Association of NEW SOUTH WALES

Chairperson: Cr Ken Keith OAM  
PO Box 337 Parkes NSW 2870  
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## MINUTES

### GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 2022 THEATRETTE, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY

The meeting opened at 8.31 a.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 Aaron Jones, Acting General Manager  
Bega Valley Shire Council, Cr Russell Fitzpatrick, Mayor  
Bega Valley Shire Council, Mr Anthony McMahon, CEO  
Bellingen Shire Council, Cr Steve Allan, Mayor  
Bellingen Shire Council, Ms Liz Jeremy, General Manager  
Bland Shire Council, Cr Brian Monaghan, Mayor  
Bland Shire Council, Mr Grant Baker, General Manager  
Blayney Shire Council, Cr Scott Ferguson, Mayor  
Broken Hill City Council, Mr Jay Nankivell, General Manager  
Cabonne Shire Council, Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor  
Cabonne Shire Council, Mr Brad Burns, General Manager  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr Charlie Sheahan, Mayor  
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Mr Glen McAtear, Deputy General Manager  
Dubbo Regional Council, Mathew Dickerson, Mayor  
Dubbo Regional Council, Mr Murray Wood, CEO  
Federation Council, Cr Patrick Bourke, Mayor  
Forbes Shire Council, Cr Chris Roylance, Deputy Mayor  
Forbes Shire Council, Mr Steve Loane, General Manager  
Gilgandra Shire Council, Cr Doug Batten, Mayor  
Gilgandra Shire Council, Mr David Neeves, General Manager  
Glen Innes Shire Council, Cr Rod Banham, Mayor  
Glen Innes Shire Council, Mr Dennis McIntyre, Acting General Manager  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Cr Bob Peter Walker, Mayor  
Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Mr Aaron Johansson, CEO  
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  
Hilltops Council, Cr Margaret Roles, Mayor  
Inverell Shire Council, Cr Paul Harmon, Mayor  
Kempsey Shire Council, Mr Craig Milburn, General Manager  
Kiama Municipal Council, Cr Neil Reilly, Mayor  
Kiama Municipal Council, Ms Jane Stroud, General Manager  
Kyogle Council, Cr Kylie Thomas, Mayor  
Lachlan Shire Council, Cr John Medcalf, Mayor  
Lachlan Shire Council, Mr Greg Tory, General Manager  
Leeton Shire Council, Cr Tony Reneker, Mayor  
Leeton Shire Council, Ms Jackie Kruger, General Manager  
Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Cr Doug Hawkins, Mayor  
Lockhart Shire Council, Cr Greg Verdon, Mayor  
Lockhart Shire Council, Mr Peter Veneris, General Manager  
Mid-Western/Mudgee Regional Council, Mr Brad Cam, General Manager  
Moree Plains Shire Council, Mr Mick Tobin, Acting General Manager  
Narrabri Shire Council, Cr Ron Campbell, Mayor  
Narrandera Shire Council, Cr Neville Schenka, Mayor  
Narrandera Shire Council, Mr George Cowan, General Manager  
Narromine Shire Council, Cr Craig Davies, Mayor  
Narromine Shire Council, Ms Jane Redden, General Manager  
Oberon Council, Cr Mark Kellam, Mayor  
Oberon Council, Mr Gary Wallace, General Manager  
Orange City Council, Cr Jason Hamling, Mayor  
Parkes Shire Council, Cr Ken Keith, Mayor  
Snowy Monaro Regional Council, Cr Narelle Davis, Mayor  
Snowy Valleys Council, Cr Ian Chaffey, Mayor  
Snowy Valleys Council, Mr Hamish McNulty, Interim General Manager  
Tamworth Regional Council, Cr Russell Webb, Mayor  
Tamworth Regional Council, Mr Paul Bennett, General Manager  
Temora Shire Council, Cr Rick Firman, Mayor  
Temora Shire Council, Mrs Elizabeth Smith, Director of Administration and Finance  
Tenterfield Shire Council, Cr Bronwyn Petrie, Mayor  
Uralla Shire Council, Cr Robert Crouch, Deputy Mayor  
Uralla Shire Council, Ms Kate Jessep, General Manager  
Wagga Wagga City Council, Cr Dallas Tout, Mayor  
Wagga Wagga City Council, Mr Peter Thompson, General Manager  
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Ambrose Doolan, Mayor  
Warrumbungle Shire Council, Mr Roger Bailey, General Manager  
Weddin Shire Council, Cr Craig Bembrick, Mayor  
Weddin Shire Council, Ms Noreen Vu, General Manager  
Wingecarribee Shire Council, Mr Viv May, Interim Administrator  
Wingecarribee Shire Council, Ms Lisa Miscamble, General Manager  
LGNSW, Cr Darriea Turley, President  
LGNSW, Mr Scott Phillips, CEO  
OLG Ally Dench, Executive Director  
OLG Karen Purser  
Mark Honey

**APOLOGIES:**

As submitted

**SPECIAL GUESTS:**

- (a) Darriea Turley, President, LGNSW
- (b) The Hon Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Planning, Minister for Homes
- (c) Ms Amy Dumbrell, Acting Director, Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and Dr Louisa Mamouney, Acting Executive Director, Biodiversity Credit Supply Fund and Taskforce
- (d) Mr Justin Clancy MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health
- (e) Mr Greg Warren MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Veterans and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney

**2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Meeting held on 27 May 2022 be accepted as a true and accurate record (Temora Shire Council / Gwydir Shire Council).

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

NIL

**4. CORRESPONDENCE**

Outward

- (a) The Hon Jim Chambers MP, Treasurer, stressing that funding for Local Government should remain at the levels of the previous government and preferably at a higher level
- (b) The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister, stressing that funding for Local Government should remain at the levels of the previous government and preferably at a higher level
- (c) Mr Chris Minns MP, Leader of the Opposition NSW, urging bi-partisan support to ensure all 44 recommendations of the Legislative Council Inquiry into Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW are adopted
- (d) The Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, Premier NSW, urging bi-partisan support to ensure all 44 recommendations of the Legislative Council Inquiry into Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW are adopted
- (e) The Hon Wendy Tuckermann MP, Minister for Local Government, seeking urgent amendment to clause 34 subsection 2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021
- (f) The Hon Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Planning and Minister for Homes, seeking urgent amendment to clause 34 subsection 2 of the Environmental



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

- (g) Ms Anna Bowden, Head of Social Impact, Royal Far West, thanking her for her presentation to the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (h) The Hon Kevin Anderson MP, Minister for Lands and Water, Minister for Hospitality and Racing, thanking him for his presentation to the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (i) The Hon Wendy Tuckermann MP, Minister for Local Government, thanking her for her presentation to the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (j) The Hon Paul Toole MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, Minister for Police, thanking him for his presentation to the 27 May 2022 meeting
- (k) Adjunct Professor, Ruth Stewart, Commissioner, National Rural Health Commission, thanking her for her presentation to the Health Forum on the 26 May 2022
- (l) Mr Richard Colbran, Chief Executive officer, NSW Rural Doctors Network, thanking him for his presentation to the Health Forum on the 26 May 2022
- (m) Mr Ryan Park MP, Shadow Minister for Health, Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Shadow Minister for the Illawarra and South Coast, thanking him for his presentation to the Health Forum on the 26 May 2022
- (n) The Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC, Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health and Minister for Mental Health, thanking her for her presentation to the Health Forum on the 26 May 2022
- (o) The Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC, Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health and Minister for Mental Health, forwarding to her the list of participants suggestions to move forward with Regional and Rural Health
- (p) The Hon Dominic Perrotet MP, Premier NSW, inviting him to present to next meeting to be held on the 5 August 2022
- (q) The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, inviting her to present to next meeting to be held on the 5 August 2022
- (r) Mr Edward Cavanough, Executive Director and Director Policy, McKell Institute, thanking him for participating in the Executive Committee meeting held on the 9 June 2022 and inviting him to be a presenter at the Skills Forum on the 4 August 2022
- (s) The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister, regarding the deployment of overseas doctors
- (t) The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care regarding the deployment of overseas doctors
- (u) The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Regional Development and Local Government regarding continuous funding for the Building Better Regions program
- (v) Cr Linda Scott, President ALGA, seeking support for the continuance of the Building Better Regions program
- (w) Cr Darriea Turley, President, LGNSW, seeking support for the continuance of the Building Better Regions program

Inward

- (a) Mr Marcus Ray, Group Deputy Secretary, Planning and Assessment regarding employment zones reform

- (b) Mr Brett Whitworth, Deputy Secretary, Planning Policy, regarding clause 34 subsection 2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021
- (c) The Hon Dugald Sanders MP, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Western NSW, regarding standards for breeding dogs
- (d) The Hon James Griffith MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage, regarding the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme
- (e) The Hon Dominic Perretot MP, Premier NSW, advising that the Government is currently considering the recommendation of the Legislative Council Inquiry into Health Outcomes and Access to Health and Hospital Services in Rural, Regional and Remote NSW
- (f) Leeton Shire Council, forwarding letter from LGNSW to the Treasurer, Minister Cooke MP, Auditor General, and Minister Tuckerman MP, regarding treatment of RFS assets
- (g) Letter from the Department of Planning and Environment to the Auditor General regarding the treatment of RFS assets
- (h) Riverina Joint Organisation regarding the proposal to introduce a Domestic Waste Charge peg

NOTED

#### **5. President Cr Darriea Turley, LGNSW Update**

Cr Turley provided a report on the work of LGNSW since the last meeting including Annual Conference 2022, Local Government Week and Awards Dinner, Emergency Services Levy and Rural Fire Service Assets, State Budget, Upper House Inquiry into floods, and advocacy into Parliamentary Inquiry into elections held under COVID 19 conditions, Domestic Waste Charges Review, addressing council staff shortages, ePlanning and NSW Planning Portal, rural and regional health and recent advocacy wins

#### **6. Mr Tom O'Dea, Head of NBN Local NSW**

There are 21 NBN professionals looking after Regional and rural shareholders. NBN is a Government Business Enterprise which sells to telecommunication providers and is accountable to the Federal Government. NBN has delivery partnerships with contractors and subcontractors. It is the provider that supplies the modems of varying quality. Householders often place the modems in their homes that are not efficient. NBN's purpose is to lift digital capability at a local level. On the ground NBN have Community Engagement Managers, business leads and community ambassadors. Part of their staff engagement is that staff have to live in the area they serve. The focus is delivering digital capability, developing regional infrastructure, supporting regional performance and integration within local communities. 12.1million homes are connected, 8.5million are connected to a plan and 76% have 50mbps wholesale speed. In regional Australia 3.4million premises are connected. \$750million is being invested in upgrading the fixed wireless network and extending the range of the fixed wireless network with benefits of extended coverage, faster speeds, improved busy home speeds, and enhanced data levels. NBN needs to get the message out and needs insights, opportunities and the voice of customers from councils.

## **7. The Hon Anthony Roberts, Minister for Planning, Minister for Homes**

The government is committed to having diversity of housing. Regional housing pressures have been caused through migration and more people are staying in the regions and the need for housing intensifies. The 2022 budget housing package includes \$500million to unlock land and \$174million to support key workers moving to the regions. The Housing Strategy 2041 has been developed and there are lessor assessment times. A regional Housing Taskforce has been set up to examine the barriers to the provision of housing and affordability in the regions and all their recommendations have been accepted. \$34million has been set aside over 4 years to implement the Taskforce recommendations. A Regional Housing Flying Squad has been created to assist regional councils. Under the next phase of the Accelerated Housing Infrastructure Fund \$120million has been set aside for high growth regional areas. The shortage of Planners in regional areas is being addressed by allowing councils to outsource the assessment of housing DA's to consultants. The Regional Housing Flying Squad program is be considered for a twelve month extension. Agritourism is a booming industry and the government is helping farmers to diversify their businesses. Certain agritourism activities will be listed as exempt or complying development. All of the nine Regional Plans are being reviewed responding to impacts and linked to other State strategies. Tribute was paid to the leaders of the flood affected areas and an Independent Inquiry report will be released soon. \$150million will be available to build and replace social houses and \$10million allocated to replace police homes. Money is being allocated to close the GAP. There is always going to be challenges with new technology such as the planning portal.

## **8. Financial Report**

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

## **9. Presentation of Emeritus Mayor Award by Cr Darriea Turley, President LGNSW**

Cr Darriea Tulley presented retired Mayor Mark Honey, Kiama Municipal Council, with his Emeritus Mayor certificate and pin

## **10. Introduction of the Country Mayors Lapel Badge**

Cr Firman Executive member outlined the purpose of the lapel pins to promote the Country Mayors Association and to recognize the professionalism of its members. The lapel pins were handed out to attending Mayors. Those not attending will be given their pins at future meetings

## **11. Ms Amy Dumbrell, Acting Director, Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and Dr Louisa Mamouney, Acting Executive Director, Biodiversity Credit Supply Fund and Taskforce**

The Biodiversity Offset Scheme has had a history since 1995 with a shift to method based in 2007 and in 2014 an offset policy for major projects became compulsory. In 2016 the Biodiversity Conservation Act was passed and in 2020 the Australian Government endorsed the scheme. In 2021 the Integrated Improvement and Assistance Program commenced and in 2022 the review of LMBC commences. The Biodiversity Scheme aims to avoid, minimize and offset the impacts of development on biodiversity consistent with the principles of ecological sustainable development. It is required under DA's. \$550million Biodiversity credits have been traded and 36,000 hectares of land protected. The scheme is being improved by refining it, and scaling up, through a strategy to increase credit supply, identifying pain points, a local government support program, additional assessors and a help desk. The Biodiversity Credits Supply Fund and Taskforce have identified that credits are too hard to attain and expensive and that buyers and sellers are hard to identify. Problems need to be resolved to make a significant difference in the coming months by fast tracking of Biodiversity credits, operate a credit supply fund and enhance conservation benefits. It can be made easier by targeting support, streamlining processes, provide upfront support, simplifying the BSA agreement, opportunities to connect, more information, addressing barriers and communication and engagement.

RESOLVED That the Country Mayors Association make representations to the NSW Government on the gross failings of the Biodiversity Scheme, the inadequacies of the review to address the real problems of the scheme, and the ongoing economic hardship and loss of development of regional NSW (Narromine Shire Council / Gilgandra Shire Council)

## **12. Mr Justin Clancy MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health**

Mr Clancy thanked CMA for its insights into regional and rural health and the wellbeing of our communities. There is no quick fix for regional and rural health but the 2022 State budget has provided a significant boost to operational and capital expenditure including the allocation of additional staff with \$883million over 4 years to attract regional and rural workers. Tailored programs are to be introduced to take up positions and increased training opportunities. The elective surgery waitlist will get additional funding over the next 2 years. Hospital and health facility upgrades have been important for health outcomes and in the next 4 years there will be \$3billion spent on capital infrastructure including staff accommodation in regional NSW. \$740million over 5 years will be spent on palliative care covering an extra 600 nurses and other staff, and social care is to have a virtual connection to provide equity and care and there will be virtual care access to health specialists. A virtual intensive care unit has been announced in Broken Hill for remote NSW. Travel and accommodation support has been expanded in the budget. A new Regional Health Division was established in April this year and will look at the recommendations of Legislative Council report and other issues. The new Advisory Panel will be working on the Regional Health Plan which has had 1,200 face to face meetings held to develop it. The draft plan will be available for comment in September this year.

### **13. Mr Greg Warren MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Veterans, and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney**

Mr Warren thanked Country Mayors for the opportunity to meet with members. He advised that he had written to the Emergency Services and Local Government Ministers regarding the treatment of RFS assets and advised there needs to be a legislative change. There needs to be changes made in respect to Joint Organisation funding and legislative requirements and that both issues were on labors radar.

### **14. Scholarship Sub Committee of the Executive Committee**

RESOLVED that NSW Country Mayors Association adopt an Inprinciple position with implementing a suitable Scholarship program, to assist in addressing skills shortages in our communities and further  
That the NSW CMA Executive be authorised to compile Criteria and Structure of Scholarship programme, to report back to NSW CMA for final endorsement.  
( Gunnedah Shire Council / Temora Shire Council

### **15. Suggestions for positive change for Regional and Rural Health**

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

RESOLVED that the suggestions be left in the hands of the Executive to monitor and followup ( Parkes Shire Council / Gunnedah Shire Council

### **16. Wakefield Park Development**

Goulburn Mulwaree Council advised of Wakefield Park Raceway's appeal to NSW Land and Environment Court against consent conditions imposed. The appeal was upheld but the Court imposed stricter noise management conditions that impact on the definition of an event which could make the raceway unviable

## **17. Demerger Proposal of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council**

RESOLVED that Country Mayors write a letter to the Boundaries Commission supporting their decision which recommends the demerger of the councils should proceed (Parkes Shire Council / Gunnedah Shire Council)

## **18. Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, 18 November 2022

NOTED

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.40pm.

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