

ADDITIONAL / LATE MOTIONS

CATEGORY 1 – FOR DEBATE

4.1 LGNSW Board

Drought Responses

That Local Government NSW calls for the development and implementation of integrated long term National, State Drought Policies and Plans. Elements of the policy must include:

1. A commitment to provide long term water security and related initiatives such as fodder banks
2. Bringing forward planned water infrastructure projects and identifying new infrastructure projects that will assist in providing long term water security
3. Support for demand management and water saving initiatives down to the household level
4. Removal of unnecessary red tape on water projects
5. Stronger support for emergency responses such as water carting
6. A review of Water Sharing Plans, particularly in relation to need for optimisation of the management of environmental flows
7. Commitment to actively engage councils in development of all policies and plans
8. Provision for funding local government drought coordinators
9. Explicit recognition by the State and Federal Governments that they have a community service obligation (CSO) to subsidise water and sewerage infrastructure and services in small rural and regional communities
10. Increased provision of financial and mental health support for communities impacted by drought (supported by roadshows to make people aware of available assistance).

L1 Forbes Shire Council

Asbestos Flying Squad

That Local Government NSW lobbies the Environment Protection Authority to fund the establishment and operation of an Asbestos Emergency Management Flying Squad (AEMFS). The purpose of the AEMFS is to provide expert advice and guidance to councils when councils are required to manage and/or participate in the clean-up of asbestos following natural disasters. The AEMFS is to consist of a group of suitably experienced and qualified people in asbestos management providing expert guidance to Recovery Committees, Local Emergency Management Officers, and other council staff on the remediation of asbestos contamination or disturbance of any asbestos material, including naturally occurring, during or following a natural disaster or emergency.

Note from Council

Following bushfires in 2013, Coonabarabran Council staff members that were directly involved in the bushfire recovery gained significant knowledge in successful asbestos clean-up practices. In 2014, two employees from Warrumbungle Shire Council were invited by Blue Mountains City Council to provide advice and assistance on the management of asbestos materials whilst the incident was still unfolding. In 2017 the same staff led the clean-up after the Sir Ivan fire east of Dunedoo. The establishment of the "Flying Squad" was first proposed at the debrief from the 2013 fires, again after the Blue Mountains fires and Sir Ivan fires debrief. This sharing of resources is not to take over the emergency response but to assist and build on knowledge to the affected council.

- Composition – experts with suitable experience, approx. 3 people
- Period – 2 years trial
- Qualifications – asbestos removal related qualifications
- Funding – Environmental Protection Authority
- Oversight body – EPA's NSW Asbestos Coordination Unit

L2 Glen Innes Severn Council

Maintenance grading – rural roads

That Local Government NSW makes representations to both the Australian and NSW Governments identifying the impending future demands for funding in respect of unsealed road maintenance in rural areas of the State when the current drought finally ends, and further identifies and seeks the provision from Government of additional funding for this purpose, which at this stage is unquantified.

Note from Council

Due to the extreme dry conditions and a resultant lack of water across parts of NSW during this once in a generation drought, many rural councils have had to cease their regular road maintenance grading program simply because there is no water to undertake such works. Given that the regular maintenance is not being undertaken, the gravel road network is falling into disrepair and will need significant funds to bring them back to being "fit for purpose". Whilst councils may have restricted the funds not spent as originally allocated to maintenance grading, when it does rain the demand for maintenance grading will far exceed the financial capability of councils to undertake. Whilst the quantum of funding required has yet to be determined, a crumbling unsealed road network would indicate that a significant amount of funding will be required.

L3 Brewarrina Shire Council

Membership WaterNSW Board

That Local Government NSW lobbies the Minister for Water to review the membership of the WaterNSW Board to include representation from local government, nominated by LGNSW, of persons with hands on experience in rural communities to represent the interests of rural water suppliers.

Note from Council

WaterNSW has responsibility for water licensing, approvals, trading and establishing priorities for water management in the Murray Darling Basin and yet not one of the Ministerial appointed board, has any background or experience in rural NSW or represents the interests of rural water suppliers. Clearly there is a need for change and those who are in charge of WaterNSW need to be more attuned to the needs of river communities and the importance of rules for water management that reflect the importance of maintaining town and country water supplies.

CATEGORY 1 – COVERED BY EXISTING LEAD MOTIONS

Covered by motion 4.1

Brewarrina Shire Council – Barwon Darling Water Strategy

That Local Government NSW requests that the Minister for Water expedite the development of a long term strategy that will assist in providing surety of a flow in the Barwon Darling River system and in doing so, also provide long term security of water supply for those towns located along the Barwon Darling River System who are dependent on the river as the sole source of water.

Note from Council

The Barwon Darling River has only experienced flows in substantive parts the river over the past two years via to the provision of two environmental flows which have been supplemented by flows from minor tributaries. The second of these flows only provided a flow to Brewarrina with those communities missing out and reliant on the flows from the small tributaries. The current situation is dire with water supplies almost exhausted in the majority of towns with a reliance on bore supplies. Had it not been for the environmental flows the situation would have been catastrophic. It is not the time for trying to apportion blame but rather to take action that will, as far as is possible, stop the current situation being replicated into the future.

Covered by motion 85

Snowy Valleys Council – Rural regional hospitals

That Local Government NSW calls for the NSW Minister for Health to advocate to the Federal Minister the critical situation at the Tumut hospital and lack of availability of procedural doctors and practitioners which exists across other LGAs in regional NSW.

Note from Council

The shortage of medical practitioners in rural and remote Australia has been a problem for a long time. The lack of access to quality facilities, services and doctors is a key barrier to improving the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

The recruitment and retention of medical practitioners to small country towns across NSW is extremely problematic and is fast approaching crisis point. Attracting and retaining health professionals in rural and regional areas is a significant challenge and an issue that impacts on regional viability. Access to appropriate health services is important to our residents and our businesses in terms of liveability and economic development.

For Snowy Valleys Council, the loss of skilled doctors and medical obstetricians in all of our communities is forcing our residents to travel outside of the region to access these services. Tumut Hospital has increasingly been forced to go on Critical Operations Standard Operating Procedures or bypass as doctors are often not available or willing to provide emergency and after-hours services. It is my understanding that this places more stress on our neighbouring communities and the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. In spite of the hundreds of millions of dollars being invested in finding solutions to the problem over many years, the situation is worsening. Further, being 'incident ready' is a priority for the township of Tumut and particularly for the Tumut Hospital, given the scale and nature of the Snowy Hydro 2.0 project, with a large proportion of the construction activity occurring within Snowy Valleys Council's borders. The commencement of the exploration works for Snowy 2.0 will see an immediate increase in the population and use of health facilities and access to medical services by workers and their families in the area.

There are a number of large industries in the Snowy Valleys Council LGA that have a high risk for significant injury. Among these are a number of timber manufacturing plants operated by AKD, Borg, Visy, Hyne Timber and the Bago hardwood mill. The Forestry Corporation of NSW has significant plantations in the LGA supporting a large number of forest harvesting operations and heavy haulage businesses. Snowy Hydro also has a large footprint in the Council area with assets in and around the townships of Khancoban, Talbingo and Cabramurra. The need for reliable and accessible medical services and modern health facilities for the Snowy Valleys LGA has never been greater.

We are very concerned that the current strategies for medical workforce recruitment and retention are not working. The residents of the Snowy Valleys communities have a right to ask what resources are being deployed to address this critical issue both immediately and for the longer term. As Councillors, it is our job to advocate for solutions in order to ensure these essential services are being delivered and the medical needs for our communities are being met. On behalf of my colleagues, I urge the Australian Government, with urgency, to expedite the approval for the Murrumbidgee Local Health District initiative and to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to address the critical health professional shortages in rural NSW.

Covered by motion 93

Cumberland Council – Dowry abuse

That Local Government NSW lobbies the NSW Government to amend the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* to include economic abuse and that within this inclusion, dowry abuse is recognised as a form of economic abuse.