



CENTRAL NSW
JOINT ORGANISATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Date of Release: 23 February 2022

Approved by: Cr John Medcalf OAM, Chair of Central NSW Joint Organisation, Mayor of Lachlan Shire Council

“Outgoing Chair of Central NSW Councils calls for common sense in State programming”

Local Government leaders will be meeting in Sydney Monday 28 February to Wednesday 2 March 2022 at a special conference of Local Government NSW members. Mayors and Councilors of the Central NSW Joint Organisation will be there to come to agreement on how to tackle their growing concerns for the sustainability of Local Government services in the context of the current raft of State decision making and programming.

“It is clear when reading the business paper for the Conference that Councils around NSW have significant concerns for the management of the State,” said Cr Medcalf, Mayor of Lachlan and outgoing Chair of the Central NSW Joint Organisation.

“For example, the biodiversity offset scheme is a good idea but the financial penalty is far too high and this is really stifling development. The E Portal that sought to enable faster consent times for development applications has slowed them down. Amalgamations that have supposed to save Councils and communities millions of dollars have sent a significant number of these new larger Councils to the wall. The intent of these processes was good but the outcomes have been poor,” said Cr Medcalf.

“We also need to be heard on regional plan making. Effective communication is so important. The State’s strategic process can go from rushed to years in the making. These are for important things like transport and drinking water,” said Cr Medcalf.

“Then there is the culture of churn and change when every change in the Ministry has a change in the bureaucracy which can take up to three years to effect. Given how often the Ministries change it is easy to see how service levels can decline,” said Cr Medcalf.

“Local Government has extremely sound, regulated systems in place to assure their communities of good governance. We must go to the people every term and ask then what they want. We must have workforce, asset management and long-term financial plans that reflect the communities’ aspirations. We have audit, risk management and assurance frameworks regulated by the State. We have to report to the community on these annually and every term,” said Cr Medcalf.

“Imagine if the State Government had to go to the people every term and ask what they want, deliver it and then report against it,” said Cr Medcalf.

“Instead, the viability of Councils is under threat from decisions like Infrastructure Contributions, Emergency Service Levies and most recent the 0.7% rate rise,” said Cr Medcalf.



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“Around the State Councils are working on how to reduce service levels to communities as they try to remain solvent with prices going through the roof and the State response it to ask us to do more with less. Everyone drives past petrol stations and goggles at the prices. We know that construction costs are up by up to 35% - if you can get materials at all,” said Cr Medcalf.

“While Councils welcome funding for infrastructure, more flexibility would be better so we can deliver what we know our communities want. Our communities tell us they want better roads. How good would it be if the focus was on roads in the stimulus packages? Or the provision of quality secure water?” said Cr Medcalf.

“There needs to be a root and branch review of how the State is working with Councils. We need more outcomes and less process. Councils need to be respected and supported as true partners with the State.’ said Cr Medcalf.

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