

1.1. **Mayoral Minute - 25/11/2024 - Advocacy - Meetings in Sydney - 13 to 15 November 2024**

Report by Mayor – Councillor Cassandra Coleman

Commentary

From 13 to 15 November 2024, the Mayor and General Manager attended the following meetings in Sydney:

- 13 November - Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) Board Meeting: a Delegates Report will be provided to the January Ordinary Meeting.
- 14 November – CNSWJO meetings with Ministers at NSW Parliament House.
- 15 November - Country Mayors Association Annual General Meeting.
- 15 November – individual meetings with The Hon. Jo Haylen MP, Minister for Transport and The Hon. Courtney Houssos MLC, Minister for Finance and Natural Resources.

Thursday 14 November was a day was one of engagement with senior NSW Government representatives hosted by Mr Phil Donato, Member for Orange. The Mayor raised issues which are important to the local community as follows:

- The Hon. Chris Minns MP, Premier of NSW -
 - The Mayor spoke to the Premier about removing Lithgow from the Waste to Energy precinct. The community has made it very clear that they are not interested in hosting the project.
 - The Mayor raised that the Lithgow Local Government Area has lost \$5M each year due to the axing of the resource for regions program. Lithgow needs assistance with supporting the jobs of the future. The Council needs to be directed to another stream of funding.
- The Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads: The Mayor raised the issue of the Wolgan Valley Road. Reconstruction. We have over 100 citizens that need certainty. The Mayor also advocated for a road over the mountains that needs to be a priority, especially with the future Western Sydney airport. The Bell Lines expressway needs to be revisited, both the Federal and State government need to be bold.
- The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC, Treasurer: The Mayor raised the issue regarding a proposed new Fire Station and the issue of contamination (PFAS) which was raised by the Fire Brigade Employee Union. Fire and Rescue NSW have confirmed that further funds allocated to the project would solve the problem. The community still need and want a new Fire Station in Lithgow.
- The Hon. Stephen Lawrence MLC: The Mayor raised the issue of the future of the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum. At the 8 October 2024 Ordinary meeting Council resolved to seek clarification from Thales and the Lithgow Small Arms Museum Executive on the delays in approving essential maintenance works (Min. No. 24-200). It is understood that a heritage order was requested in October 2024 by heritage professional Bronwyn Hanna.
- The Hon Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Water, Housing, Mental Health: The Mayor raised the issue of a number of vacant public housing dwellings that need attention. The public housing shortage in Lithgow is a serious concern. The Mayor also raised the issue of maintenance backlog for public housing. The Mayor spoke of the importance of responding to emergency maintenance in a timely manner and the associated difficulties for local residents.
- The Hon Ryan Park MP, Minister for Health: the Mayor invited the Minister to visit the Lithgow LGA.
- The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Emergency Services: The Mayor raised the Fire and Rescue NSW station funding shortfall again.

On Friday 15 November, The Mayor and General Manager met with The Hon. Jo Haylen MP, Minister for Transport and The Hon. Courtney Houssos MLC, Minister for Finance and Natural Resources.

Matters raised with Minister Haylen included:

- The need for improvements to rail services across the Central West: The Minister suggested that the Council write to the Premier and Treasurer to advocate for an uplift to an hourly, seven days a week train service to Lithgow, particularly following the Premier's directive for NSW public servants to return to the office.
- Improved road access to the Central West: the Mayor spoke of access to the Central West by road being significantly constrained. Council is asking the NSW Government to fund improvements to the Great Western Highway, alongside the Bells Line of Road Expressway.
- Lithgow Locomotive Workshop: the Mayor discussed potential uses of the Locomotive Workshop for rail manufacturing by Lithgow-based rail businesses and/or maintenance support for regional passenger train services. The mayor advocated for the NSW Government to take on ownership of the site.
- Unlocking the Marrangaroo Growth Precinct: the ask of the NSW Government is to support Lithgow's residential and industrial growth by either:
 - a) removing the Controlled Access Road designation of the Great Western Highway through Marrangaroo, or
 - b) committing to the subsidy of a grade separated interchange (approx. \$200 million) to otherwise render this land economic for future access and development.

The Mayor discussed the Lithgow LGA's economic transition with Minister Houssos. The Minister provided an update on consultation on the Future Jobs and Investment Authorities Issues Paper. The Minister suggested that the Council write to the Federal Government to seek a \$2M contribution from the Net Zero Economy Authority towards the \$4.2M required annually to implement the LEEP Action Plan. If successful, the NSW Government would consider contribution of the balance required. The Minister also provided other avenues for advocacy efforts.

The Mayor also asked the NSW Government to make the Royalties for Regions Fund available for priority project and program expenditures.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the advocacy undertaken by the Mayor and General Manager in Sydney from 13 to 15 November 2024.
2. Write to the Premier and Treasurer to advocate for an uplift to an hourly, seven days a week train service to Lithgow, as suggested by The Hon. Jo Haylen MP, Minister for Transport.
3. Write to the Federal Government to seek a \$2M contribution from the Net Zero Economy Authority towards the \$4.2M required annually to implement the LEEP Action Plan, as suggested by The Hon. Courtney Houssos MLC, Minister for Finance and Natural Resources.