



Thursday, 5 October 2006

MEDIA RELEASE

Councils push for partnership from State Government

The seven member councils of the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) met in Lane Cove today to push for greater recognition of the Northern Sydney region from the State Government and a more equitable partnership in planning for the region's future. The theme of the conference was "Working together for a better region".

More than 50 councillors and senior staff from Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Ku-ring-gai, Lane Cove, North Sydney, Ryde, and Willoughby councils gathered to consider regional issues and develop regional policy at the Annual NSROC Conference.

Delegates at the conference received a key note address from the Hon. Kerry Hickey MP, Minister for Local Government, as well as an address from the Shadow Minister for Local Government, Mr John Turner MP. Delegates also considered a number of regional motions covering a diverse range of issues such as rate-pegging, infrastructure planning, management of crown land, councillor professional development and the filtration of road tunnels.

Councillor Pat Reilly, Mayor of Willoughby Council and the President of NSROC, stated that coming together as a region was important to ensure that councillors adopted a broad view on some of the challenges facing local government.

"Councils across the state are struggling with environmental issues, rate pegging, development and on-going cost shifting. Through the NSROC alliance we are learning from each other and developing joint approaches to important matters such as land use planning, purchasing, and environmental reporting. We all recognise that councils need to be increasingly sophisticated in the way they operate. By pooling our knowledge and expertise we can achieve better outcomes for the people of northern Sydney."

Councillor Reilly added that councils needed to push for greater recognition and involvement by State and Federal governments in managing regional affairs.

"When we unite as a region we have more chance of having our voices heard by our counterparts in Macquarie Street and Canberra. While we might hear the term partnership from the other spheres of government, too often it translates into being treated like a subordinate when the important decisions are being made or when the funding is being allocated. Our regional alliance has a strong record of delivering better outcomes and cost savings for our communities, and we will be working to ensure the role of local government and the voice of our communities are given the recognition in regional decision making that they deserve," said Councillor Reilly.

Hornsby – Hunter's Hill – Ku-ring-gai – Lane Cove – North Sydney – Ryde – Willoughby