



NEWS RELEASE

STATE CALLED ON TO PROVIDE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION FUND TO COUNCILS

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The State Government is being called on to provide a reform implementation fund so councils can put in place long term strategic planning and asset management systems.

The need for a fund was flagged by the Strengthening Local Government Task Force, which has completed a review of the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government.

“The task force has reviewed the Allan inquiry and generally supported its findings and recommendations,” Co-chair of the Strengthening Local Government Task Force, and President of the Local Government Association of NSW, Cr Genia McCaffery said.

“Councils need a boost in revenue through increased grants from other levels of government, and more flexibility to raise their own revenue. Crucial to this will be a community infrastructure fund, as proposed by ALGA, the abolition of rate pegging, and a fairer share of taxation revenue.

“An Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) between the State Government and Local Government has also been confirmed as important.

“The Task Force rejected outright the proposal to cut back on social services until the infrastructure back log is addressed. Services like libraries are crucial to communities, and rate payers should not be forced to choose between having a library or a road.”

The Associations are currently negotiating an IGA through the Minister for Local Government, are to carry out a cost shifting survey, and have contributed to the review of integrated planning and reporting and asset management systems.

“The sector is calling on the Government for an implementation fund so councils can put in place long term strategic planning and asset management systems,” Co Chair of the Task Force and President of the Shires Association of NSW, Cr Bruce Miller said.

“We have also promoted resource sharing as a way of relieving skills shortages, and there have been positive developments including the establishment of Local Government Procurement and the Strategic Alliance Network.

“Councils are making real progress on many of these solutions, but we are calling on the State Government to formally respond to the positions table developed by the Task Force.”

The positions table can be found at www.strengtheningLG@lgsa.org.au

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