

# ADVOCACY UPDATE

APRIL 2019



In the lead up to the March election, you asked us to advocate for you on 12 priority areas.

This update shows the commitments LGNSW secured against those priorities from key political parties, as at March 2019.

Working closely with our members, through campaigns, debates and ongoing representation, we ensured the voice of local government was heard.

We are pleased to report the commitments we secured. Next, we will work with a re-elected Berejiklian government to realise and build on those commitments and we'll continue to provide you with regular progress reports.



Cr Linda Scott  
President, LGNSW

## Our Priorities and Progress



### 1. Save recycling

Reinvest 100% of the NSW Waste Levy, collected from community and industry, in a coordinated state-wide recycling and waste management approach and drive a circular economy.

#### Wins

- ✓ All major parties support a state-wide plan following 'Save Our Recycling' campaign
- ✓ NSW Coalition: 20-year waste strategy. Work with local government to deliver infrastructure
- ✓ NSW Labor: circular economy job creation fund - \$140m over 4 years. Set up advisory council including LGNSW
- ✓ NSW Greens: reinvest 100% of waste levy
- ✓ Shooters, Farmers and Fishers, and Christian Democrats: move waste levy out of consolidated revenue



### 2. Renew our libraries

Fund public libraries so they are sustainable. Double current funding commitments by providing an additional \$94m over the next four years, with indexation. In line with NSW law, provide 50% of funding required for NSW public libraries, in perpetuity.

#### Wins

- ✓ Both major parties committed to more than \$60m in additional funding over 4 years following our 'Renew Our Libraries' campaign
- ✓ NSW Greens and the Shooters Fishers and Farmers committed to the sector's ask in full



### 3. Fund local infrastructure

Establish an infrastructure funding program so councils can plan, build and maintain local roads, freight routes, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, green space and sporting facilities, to meet rapid population growth and movements in NSW.

#### Wins

- ✓ Bipartisan: \$1b additional for roads and bridges
- ✓ NSW Coalition:
  - take back up to 15,000km of regional roads
  - Minister for open space
  - \$150m in new public parks
  - \$400m regional telecommunications towers
  - 13 new bus routes to connect 44 regional towns
  - Fast track metro west
  - Prevent Crown Land used for recreation being sold
- ✓ NSW Labor:
  - \$8b to fast track metro west
  - \$50m for open space
  - Plant 500,000 trees per year
  - \$25m to beautify regional main streets
  - \$412m for walking and cycling infrastructure
  - Inventory of environmental assets



## 4. Restore **planning powers to communities**

Reform the NSW planning system to:

- Restore the right of metropolitan councils to choose whether to use local planning panels, allowing councils and neighbourhoods to make decisions about developments that affect them
- Fix the NSW private certification system
- Set housing targets with local governments, not for them.

### Wins

#### ✓ NSW Coalition:

- Appoint building commissioner
- Register builders and designers
- Help councils control short-term holiday letting
- Affordable housing SEPP for all councils
- Limit boarding house size in low-density areas

#### ✓ NSW Labor:

- Restore transparency and fairness
- Scrap medium-density housing, 'Planned Precincts', developer-led spot rezoning
- Establish building authority, reports to single minister
- Stop developers choosing certifiers
- Strengthen LEP process



## 6. Allow greater **financial independence**

Allow councils to levy rates up to 2% over the rate peg limit, without having to seek special rate variation approval, so councils can meet community needs with less red tape.

### Win

- ✓ Bipartisan agreement to review T-Corp loans policy that prevents councils from using regional (unrated) banks



## 7. Support **disadvantaged communities**

Provide untied, recurrent grants for councils serving the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas in NSW so they can meet community needs.

### Win

- ✓ NSW Labor: distribute financial assistance grants based on need



## 8. Protect ownership of **local water utilities**

Commit to protecting local ownership and management of council-owned water utilities (LWUs) to secure water supply and sewerage services for more than 1.8 million people in regional NSW.

### Wins

- ✓ Bipartisan: keep LWUs in council hands
- ✓ NSW Labor: \$1b to build and upgrade water infrastructure



## 5. End **cost shifting**

Hold a public inquiry into cost shifting so that no new, increased or transferred responsibilities will be imposed on local government without a sufficient corresponding source of revenue or revenue-raising capacity.

### Wins

#### ✓ NSW Coalition: take back up to 15,000km of roads

#### ✓ NSW Labor:

- Reimburse council webcasting costs
- Council summit on local government costs
- Publish local government budget paper
- Parliamentary inquiry into cost shifting



## 9. Renew our agreement

Renew the intergovernmental agreement with LGNSW to reaffirm the NSW government's intention to work as an equal partner with local government across all issues affecting councils and communities.

### Wins

- ✓ Bipartisan: renew agreement
- ✓ NSW Labor:
  - Compact with local government
  - Consult local government on relevant legislation
  - Regularly meet mayors and LGNSW
  - Allow councils to de-amalgamate



## 10. Fix local government electoral expenditure laws

Commit to fairness in council elections by amending local government expenditure provisions of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* well before the 2020 elections (in line with NSW parliamentary committee recommendations).

### Win

- ✓ NSW Coalition: consider recommendations by April 2019, implement before 2020 elections



## 11. Allow fair superannuation for mayors and councillors

Ensure mayors and councillors are entitled to receive superannuation, in line with elected federal and state parliamentarians and everyone else in the Australian workforce

- No new commitments

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## 12. Address skills shortages

Fund a new, annual \$10m program to increase the number of cadets, apprentices, trainees and university graduates employed by councils.

- Some commitments but not directly relating to councils



## 13. Other

**Music:** establish a refreshed, coordinated four-year live music program, modelled on the \$22m *Music Works* in Victoria.

- ✓ NSW Coalition: \$1m contemporary live music program
- ✓ NSW Labor:
  - Live, contemporary music fund increased from \$4m to \$35m p.a.
  - Appoint minister for music

**Regional Youth:** Appoint a dedicated minister for youth affairs

- ✓ NSW Coalition: Appoint first ever minister for regional youth

**Outside school hours care:** Identify and provide appropriate outside school hours care facilities in existing and new schools

- ✓ NSW Coalition:
  - before and after school care available to all parents of children at public primary schools by 2021
  - Establish specialist team to coordinate services and manage leases

**Early childhood education:** Fund the universal access of all three and four-year-olds to early childhood education and care

- ✓ NSW Labor: invest \$500m in early childhood education. Includes increased funding for three-year-olds in community preschools and long day care centres