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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## State Budget neglects mining affected Councils

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Discontent across NSW has continued to mount in the aftermath of the recent State Budget, with local government areas affected by mining seeing funding allocations as empty promises with little credible sustainability. Chair of the Association of Mining Related Councils (AMRC), Colleen Fuller said the feelings of neglect are common among member councils from Wollongong to Narrabri, Broken Hill to the Hunter. "Grass-roots needs, identified by this organisation, have largely been ignored by the State Government," Cr Fuller said.

During the election, the NSW Government promised to implement the Resources for the Regions program purported to be worth \$160 million, as an alternative to a "Royalties for Regions" scheme, which the mining related councils of NSW assert is the only fair model for addressing local cost burdens due to the mining industry.

The Resources for the Regions funds were to help meet local infrastructure needs arising from the growth of the mining industry. However, according to Cr Fuller, the program has failed to deliver.

The budget approved an initial \$9.9 million from the Resources for Regions program under the Restart NSW, which has been much lauded by the Coalition Government. Some \$5.9million of these funds is allocated in 2012/13 for road infrastructure projects in Singleton and \$4million is allocated to fund the development of the Emergency Department at Muswellbrook District Hospital in 2013/14.

Cr. Fuller said that Resources for Regions has proven to be tokenistic, with funding going to projects that are standard State Government responsibilities, without providing additional funding to address mining impacts.

"As Chair of the Association of Mining Related Councils, I am fielding disappointment from many of the member councils," Cr. Fuller said. "The funding received by Muswellbrook Shire and Singleton Councils does not reflect the financial contributions generated through mining royalties within these local government areas (LGAs). The highest proportion of the State's mining royalty revenue comes from these LGAs."

"There are many other areas of the State, where mining is causing problems with infrastructure and services, beyond rate-based financial capacities of local councils. The NSW Government receives well over \$1 billion in mining royalties annually and the budget has again returned hardly any of that revenue back to the region's where local government is bearing the burden of mining."

"If local economies are going to benefit from mining, councils need to have the means to facilitate infrastructure and services, to attract new (permanent) residents and negate fly-in fly-out scenarios."

The AMRC "Royalties for Regions" Committee Spokesperson, Cr. John Clements said that the NSW Government's current budget has demonstrated that a "Royalties for Regions" scheme would be the most equitable approach for mining affected councils and that the Coalition should have stood by the proposed scheme. "A "Royalties for Regions" scheme would complement Restart NSW, delivering where it has failed," he said.

Caption: Chair of the Association of Mining Related Councils (AMRC), Cr. Colleen Fuller.

*For further information, contact AMRC Chair, Cr Colleen Fuller: 0429 420 290 or 02 6742 0290*

### **The Association of Mining Related Councils comprises:**

Bland Shire Council, Blayney Shire Council, Broken Hill City Council, Campbelltown City Council, Cabonne Shire Council, Cobar Shire Council, Gloucester Shire Council, Gunnedah Shire Council, Lachlan Shire Council, Lithgow City Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Mid-Western Regional Council, Narrabri Shire Council, Newcastle City Council, Orange City Council, Parkes Shire Council, Singleton Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council, Warrumbungle Shire Council, Wollondilly Shire Council and Wollongong City Council.

[as at April, 2012.]