



MEDIA RELEASE

Mining related councils get expertise equipped

Local Government representatives from throughout NSW converged on the State Government's Country Embassy in the heart of Sydney's CBD late last week for what was considered a highly productive Association of Mining Related Councils (AMRC) meeting.

The Hon. John Barilaro, NSW Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, as well as the Hon. Rob Stokes, Minister for Planning both attended the meeting.

Council delegates appreciated the opportunity to hear presentations from and asked questions of the two Ministers. It was a two-way street. The delegates heard the latest policy developments and also told the Ministers of issues they are facing, at the coal-face of mining impacts.

Delegates were informed of how, in line with the Association's strategic plan to equip member councils with know-how resourcing, they now have access to a high-level expert panel of consultants. The Association Chair, Mayor of Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Peter Shinton explained what the initiative has involved. "We advertised for an 'Expert Panel' and were pleased to see 43 expressions of interest. They were extremely diverse in size, location and specialisations. Our Executive members interviewed the shortlisted six to select our final four."

"This panel will be used whenever the Association or member Councils need expert advice on issues in areas such as planning, environmental assessment, water quality and Aboriginal heritage."

The Warrumbungle Shire Mayor knows from experience how formidable mining related issues and paperwork can be. "When our Council had to assess the application for the Cobbora Coal mine project, it was a massive amount of work and our council's staff were not experts, with the capacity to challenge the environmental assessment."

"One of the firms which we selected for empanelment actually offered to put some of their senior people into a council that engages them, to help up-skill the council's planners. A lot of the environmental assessment material that comes through is considerable in quantity and complexity. You cannot expect council staff to always have the expertise to address every issue, particularly where mining related matters are concerned."

In the recent past, the Association has produced issues papers in relation to Coal Seam Gas, coal mining and Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs). Wollongong City Council's Special Projects Manager spent a great deal of time on the issue of VPAs for the Association. Our new Expert Panel will see us better equipped to achieve optimal outcomes, without being a drain on Council members' resources.

Ready access to the independent expert consultancies on our panel will greatly bolster the collective expertise of Local Councils within the Association of Mining Related Councils. "The Expert Panel" is the latest constructive outcome that the AMRC has delivered, beyond advocating, as the peak Local Government representative body in NSW on mining impacts," Cr. Shinton said.

Cabonne Shire Council (in the State's Central west) will host the Association's next meeting, which is to be held on Friday 13 November, 2015.

Captions:

AMRC-Syd-Aug_2015_2983.jpg

Issues focused at the recent meeting... Association of Mining Related Councils Chair Cr. Peter Shinton, Deputy Chair Cr. Chris Connor and Executive Member Cr. John Martin.

And AMRC-Syd-Aug_2015_3003.jpg

Cabonne Shire Association of Mining Related Councils delegates, Heather Nicholls and Cr Sharon Wilcox, with Chair Cr Peter Shinton (right), consider a point being made by AMRC CEO Don Tydd.

For further information, contact AMRC Chair (and Warrumbungle Shire Mayor) Cr Peter Shinton: 0428 255 420 Or Chief Executive Officer, Don Tydd: 02 6775 3844 or 0418 681 320.

www.miningrelatedcouncils.asn.au/

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AMRC Members



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