



MEDIA RELEASE

Resources for Regions commitments applauded

The Association of Mining Related Councils (AMRC) has applauded a commitment delivered in person by the Hon. John Barilaro, NSW Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business, that the contentious Resources for Regions funding program is being reviewed and there is a deadline for the process.

Once eligible for the program, mining affected Councils can apply for multi-million dollar grants that capacity-build for regional development and provide additional aid to Councils where mining impacts on local infrastructure are a financial burden.

"I heard from the Association of Mining Related Councils some of the issues and concerns around the Resources for Regions criteria. So, I'll be taking that input on board," said Minister Barilaro. "We have made a commitment that we are working through the criteria and that we have an appropriate budget allocation."

"We have also committed that before Christmas of this year, we will be releasing the new Resources for Regions program; what it will look like and outline the process going forward."

After addressing the Association, the Minister took part in a frank Q&A session, which ranged from mining impacts to the cutbacks and restructure of TAFE, with grave concerns raised from the Bland Shire.

"It is always good to contribute to a forum and meet with stakeholders who are passionate about their communities. This Association does exactly that; it brings everybody together in relation to key mining related issues, be they from industry or the skills portfolio, in my capacity as Minister," he said. "As a collective they were able to convey to me some of the issues and impediments where communities have been affected by mining. We recognise the need for those communities to maximise their benefits from that particular industry."

The Association Chair, Mayor of Warrumbungle Shire Council, Cr Peter Shinton was delighted to hear the Minister's Resources for Regions commitments. "We are very happy to hear that new criteria will be released before Christmas," he said. "We applaud the Minister's foreshadowing of the broadening of the criteria. A number of AMRC member Councils, such as Gunnedah, have been greatly frustrated by repeated failure to meet narrow, flawed, ever-changing criteria."

"Minister Barilaro also commented on how he has not been happy about how other State Government Departments were using the Resources for Regions fund to top up their own budgets, when Councils and other people in the regions have other ideas. That was extremely refreshing to hear because it is something that the Association has been complaining about to various Ministers in recent years," he said.

"In one of the first Resources for Regions funding grants, a hospital emergency unit refurbishment clearly should have been funded by the appropriate Department or Treasury, not Resources for Regions."

While commending the NSW Government for consulting with the Association and committing to improve Resources for Regions, Cr. Shinton said there has been at least four generations of the program in a short period of time, with inconsistency and shifting goal posts among the big criticisms. "Towards continuity, it's about time that we had a Minister who stays in the position for longer than a matter of months. Once a Minister is ensconced in a portfolio and gets a good feel for it, I think they should be left there - that would make a big difference."

Caption:

Association of Mining Related Councils (AMRC) Chair Cr. Peter Shinton, the Hon. John Barilaro, NSW Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business and AMRC CEO Don Tydd.

For further information, contact AMRC Chief Executive Officer, Don Tydd: 02 6775 3844 or 0418 681 320.
www.miningrelatedcouncils.asn.au/

Association of Mining
Related Councils Inc.

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