

About Us



The Association of Mining and Energy Related Councils NSW (MERC) is the peak organisation representing resource and power generation communities in New South Wales. These communities host 'engine' industries and make a substantial contribution to State wealth.

For more than 40 years, MERC has been a strong advocate for mining and energy related communities and worked with all tiers of government to maximise outcomes for member councils. We have delivered a strengthened resources and energy planning framework and obtained key funding streams – including Resources for Regions and Royalties for Rejuvenation.

We focus on delivering:

- **Government policy that strengthens the interests of members, and**
- **Funding.**

We help enable economically resilient, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable member councils.

What We Offer Our Members

- A seat at the policy development table and guidance on addressing specific challenges in your LGA.
- A united and apolitical voice for both large regional councils and small rural councils to both Sydney and Canberra.
- A strong forward policy agenda.
- The opportunity for you to meet four times a year with key decision makers, Members of Parliament and relevant Department staff and other significant stakeholders.
- Networking and problem solving.
- The opportunity to join working groups set up by MERC on specific matters to assist members.
- Access to our experienced leadership for mentoring, risk management and support.
- Centralised resources for information and event organisation.
- Consistent and timely communication through a quarterly newsletter, website and emails.
- Sound financial support with ample funds invested to cover contingencies and to engage consultants and research agencies to undertake studies or prepare submissions on behalf of members.
- Annual conference participation – a chance to stay updated on the latest mining and energy policies and collaborate on new initiatives.

Overcoming Challenges Together

Councils with mining and existing/new energy projects face many challenges, including:

- Funding.
- Strategic and land-use planning pressures.
- Obtaining a fair share of community benefits.

It is MERC's role to develop coordinated policy and member advocacy to address these challenges.

It is this focus on policy and advocacy that sets MERC apart; our members meet not only to discuss critical challenges facing local mining and energy communities, but also to develop policy and representation to government and industry that delivers better outcomes for members.



Proven Track Record

With a legacy of over 40 years, MERC has a track record of policy achievements. Here are some of our current initiatives:

- ✓ A joint NSW State Budget position paper developed between MERC councils, several non-MERC councils, the NSW Minerals Council and the Mining and Energy Union on a proposed replacement program for Resources for Regions and Royalties for Rejuvenation.
- ✓ A re-drafting of the social impact criteria under the Resources and Energy SEPP.
- ✓ A review of benefit sharing and value capture for new energy projects in NSW – including for PHES and energy from waste which are not presently addressed in the draft Guideline.
- ✓ The development of a shared planning and compliance resource for quarrying regulation in New South Wales, together with a review of the best-practice guideline.
- ✓ A submission to the review into local government revenues and the Parliamentary Inquiry into rate pegging.

We have productive relationships with the peak mining group (NSW Minerals Council) and NSW Government departments (Planning, Energy, Resources, Environment, Regional Development, Local Government, Western NSW, Transport, etc.) and work closely with workforce unions, university and research entities.

We are frequently called upon to assist the State Government with input on its policy and direction with mining and energy related matters, including renewables.

Membership

Join MERC today and become part of a proactive network dedicated to advancing the interests and prosperity of mining and energy communities in NSW. Together, we can overcome challenges and drive positive change for our communities.

Full Membership (FY24-25) – \$8,800

Full Membership provides access to MERC advocacy and policy initiatives, voting rights on MERC decision making, discounts on the MERC conference each year. Membership fees are paid pro-rata for members joining for part of the year.

Our Team

Dr Michael Askew
Executive Officer



Dr Michael Askew is an environmental planner with expertise in the coordination of transition capacity. Michael has delivered major sustainability projects for industry and government and is the founder of the Australian Transitions Academy.

Dr Askew is supported by a dedicated team of professionals, specialising in regional transition policy and governance, as well as operations and stakeholder relations.



‘Shires like Forbes, which are surrounded by mines, really benefit from the policy solutions developed by MERC and taken to Government for action.’

Cr Phyllis Miller
Mayor of Forbes



‘We are strengthening MERC by developing a comprehensive policy framework. We want as many councils to be involved in that process as possible.’

Cr Kevin Duffy
Chairperson, Mining and Energy Councils

To find out more about membership and the process for becoming a member, please contact Dr Michael Askew on 0425 764 606 or email michael@futuretogether.com.au



**MINING &
ENERGY**
COUNCILS NSW