

MERC QUARTERLY

Newsletter for Members of the
Association of Mining and Energy Related Councils



MERC LEADS CAMPAIGN ON RESOURCES FOR REGIONS

Seeks new funding mechanism for Members

MERC understands the impact that changes to Resources for Regions will have on our members. That's why MERC is leading a campaign, with coalition partners including the Mining and Energy Union and the NSW Minerals Council, to establish a new regional funding stream to support councils affected by mining and energy activities.

MERC was a co-signatory on a Joint Letter to the NSW Government on the proposed changes to Resources for Regions. MERC has met with crossbenchers to represent member concerns on the impact of this policy shift on local government and the alternatives that will create better outcomes for councils. The crossbenchers have now drafted a letter addressed to the Premier to raise the critical predicament impacted councils now face. The advocacy campaign is being run methodically and aims to leverage key decision makers to represent MERC's position to senior ministers.

OTHER STORIES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT

Our Active Advocacy Role

MERC has taken a proactive role in policy development and submissions to government in 2024. To date, our Association has submitted four detailed responses to important State Government reviews, frameworks and policies.

The four submissions have included:

1. Regional Development Act review: the most important submission relating to key regional issues and funding mechanisms for our members. MERC's submission was well-received and has been the foundation for the campaign on an alternative to Resources for Regions
2. Draft Energy Framework: MERC's submission focused on the benefits sharing challenges facing our members with the growth of renewable energy.
3. Post-Mining Land Use: another critical issue facing MERC members with mining activity and/or impacts. MERC's submission resulted in one of only 4 invitations to give evidence at the Committee hearing.
4. Future Jobs and Investment Authorities review: MERC has been active in advocating for funding for these bodies and more detailed plans so that our members can begin engaging with and benefitting from the activities of the Authorities.

MERC will continue to provide high-quality, influential policy advice to Government that will benefit our members.

Representing Your Interests

The Standing Committee on State Development has invited representatives from MERC to give evidence at a hearing on 5 August for the inquiry into beneficial and productive post-mining land use, following a detailed submission from our Association on this important issue for members.

The Committee's focus will include:

- the benefits of having multiple successive land uses
- changes in land use potential and demand in established or traditional mining areas
- opportunities for investment in training and skills
- opportunities to encourage innovative post-mining land uses
- how to ensure the benefit from innovative post mine land uses are shared between the community and mine operators
- the expectations of mining communities in relation to post-mine land use, and how to balance this with innovative reuse of existing infrastructure
- the need to develop a robust independent regulatory framework to maintain and advance best practice.



What We Offer Our Members:

- Participate in the policy development process and receive guidance on addressing specific challenges in LGAs.
- A united “apolitical voice” for both large regional Councils and small Shire Councils.
- 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 with other delegates.
- The opportunity to join working parties set up by MERC on specific matters to assist members.
- Access to our experienced team for mentoring, risk management and support.
- Centralised Resources for information and event organisation, along with keeping members informed of the latest developments and opportunities impacting local government.
- Consistent and timely communication through a quarterly Newsletter.
- Sound financial support with ample funds invested to cover contingencies and to engage consultants and research agencies to undertake studies or prepare submissions on our members behalf.
- Attend our annual conference, hosted by RDA Orana, to stay updated on the latest mining and energy policies and collaborate on new initiatives.

MERC INTRODUCES SUBCOMMITTEES

Aligning Our Policy Development to Member Needs

The Executive Committee has endorsed the creation of sub-committees (or working groups) to focus on key policy area that impact all our members.

Over the coming month, MERC will get in touch with members about the creation of two initial sub-committees:

- Resources and Energy Benefit Sharing Sub-Committee
- Quarrying Sub-Committee

These two sub-committees will provide members with a working group to devise policy that optimises outcomes for affected LGAs.

The Sub-Committees require “sponsorship” (i.e. commitment to lead and/or participate) from members. MERC will reach out to members to test interest in sponsoring these Sub-Committees.

MERC encourages all members to actively engage with the Executive to represent your views and to address your challenges.





REIIF CONFERENCE 2024

MERC has been an active member of the Conference Steering Group for the Resources Energy Industry & Innovation Forum (REIIF) to be hosted by RDA Orana in partnership with MERC. This has been a considerable effort on the part of all involved and the program has come together well.

The REIIF will be held on 6-8 August in Dubbo. MERC has been afforded the morning of 6 August (from 9:00am) to run a MERC General Meeting that will be open to non-members. This General Meeting will also include the awarding of Life Membership to Owen Hasler and a formal acknowledgement of former Executive Officer, Greg Lamont.


MEMBERSHIP

MERC is in a strong position to increase membership in 2024, with key updates including:

- Membership drive: MERC will focus on new memberships in from August to December.
- New member interest: we have strong interest from councils across regional NSW and we will seek to activate membership from 1 August.
- Membership fees for FY24-25 will be \$8,800 (ex GST) and invoices sent out in early August.



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