



DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL MAYOR ELECTED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW

Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council, Councillor Ben Shields has been elected a Director of the Board of Local Government NSW (LGNSW) to represent the interests NSW Councils. Councillor Shields was elected by fellow Councillors from across NSW during the 2017 LGNSW Annual Conference.

LGNSW is the peak industry association that represents the interests of all NSW Councils by advocating and supporting member Councils and providing a range of services including advice on policy, industrial relations and legal matters as well as mentoring programs and professional development for Councillors and Council staff.

Councillor Shields said about his election to the Board: "It's a real privilege for me to be able to serve on the board of LGNSW. It effectively means I will have a direct insight on local government matters all over the state. This is valuable industry knowledge that I will be able to bring back to the Dubbo Region and Western NSW."

Councillor Shields said he is particularly keen to increase the Association's presence in the regions.

"There is a perception that LGNSW could better reflect and represent rural and regional Councils," he said. "I am keen to have board meetings held away from the Sydney Headquarters and for the board members to meet communities from around the State."

"The local government sector as a whole has a number of challenges ahead in the coming period including the potential new Local Government Act, continual arguments about rate pegging legislation and reforming how Council services are financed," Councillor Shields said.

"I may be one of the few Councillors who actually supports rate pegging and it is important that the full story is presented and considered by the LGNSW board when determining policy," he said.

"LGNSW should also be arguing for reform in how Councils raise revenue to finance services. The current funding model which includes a mix of State and Federal grants as well as collecting rates is complicated and time consuming exercise. A nation-wide reform of local government funding with a view to making it more efficient and equitable taxation is urgently needed," Councillor Shields said.

Councillor Shields was a previous Board member from 2006 through to 2016 and was forced to step down from the role on account of the merger of Dubbo City and Wellington Councils.

"Being re-elected to the Board will allow me to continue looking at other local government areas and through that identify what and how we can do better in the Dubbo region," he said.

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