

**DR23/002 2022 LGNSW ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES REPORT**

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T00019**

Delegate: Matcher Hatcher, Amber Schutz - Councillors  
Attachments: 1. Under Separate Cover – Resolutions  
2. Under Separate Cover – Record of Decisions  
Community Goal: 5 Our engaged community with progressive leadership  
Community Strategy: 5.2 Proactive, responsive and strategic leadership  
Delivery Program Link: 5.2.1 Be proactive leaders with a focus on 'community better'  
Operational Plan Link: 5.2.1.4 Provide professional development opportunities for Councillors

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Local Government NSW 2022 Annual Conference was held on 23 October 2022 – 25 October 2022 in the Hunter Valley. The conference provided an opportunity to share ideas, seek inspiration, and help determine our sector's policy directions for the coming year. Councillors Mathew Hatcher and Amber Schutz was one of Council's delegates at the Conference and presents the following report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the Delegate Report from Councillors Mathew Hatcher and Amber Schutz be received and noted.

**BACKGROUND**

Hosted by Cessnock City Council, this year's Annual Conference provided us with the opportunity to come together, share ideas and debate key issues for councils and communities right across the state. There was a packed agenda for this conference, with 144 motions being debated and voted on.

The conference began on Sunday with a number of workshops. I attended the workshop for Universal Urban Design - creating welcoming, vibrant, safe, and inclusive communities. Speakers included Cr Romola Hollywood, Blue Mountains City Council; Dr Jane Bringolf, Centre for Universal Design Australia; Dr Justin Ellis, University of Newcastle and Fiona Morrison, Department of Planning and Environment. Universal design is a critical element in strategic planning from everything from the built environment to media content, it is something decision makers should promote and advocate for to endure equitable access for all of our community members.

Universal design began as a paradigm shift in 1950's America when many veterans returned from WW2 with mobility related injuries. In the 1970's activists created makeshift kerb ramps for wheelchairs through the University of California campus, breaking existing curbs and laying asphalt in the night. We have progressed a long way since then, but more work needs to be done to ensure good design that enables universal access for all people is at the forefront of designer and planner's minds. Some of the newer areas where progress is being made includes font design, documents that are easily readable, co-design techniques, website design, and inclusive play space. Eurobodalla Shire Council's new play space at the Botanical Gardens, which is currently in planning, was commended by Fiona Morrison and used as case study on

universal play space as part of their “Everyone Can Play” initiative. She encouraged everyone to focus on “just doing a little better” for each project.

The conference was opened by the MC Stephanie Brantz who emphasized the importance of collaboration and cooperation between councils in addressing common issues. The first keynote address was delivered by TPG Telecom - Jeremy Howe, GM Commercial Enterprise Government and Wholesale who spoke on internet connectivity and critical infrastructure. This was followed by Professor Mary O’Kane AC and Mick Fuller APM speaking to the NSW Flood Inquiry and paving a way forward. The final talk of the day was John Brogden AM, President of Life Line International who gave an emotive speech on the mental health crisis and the impact of covid on our communities. He encouraged delegates to develop their skills in mental health first aid.

One of the most interesting presentations was by Simon Kuestenmacher from the Demographics Group, who spoke to reimagining our future workforce. Simon commented that Covid resulted in approximately 90,000 jobs normally filled by migrants not being filled and said this would persist into the future. Given the generations after the Baby Boomers are much smaller, it will become increasingly more challenging to find staff for jobs. These generations also have different values and priorities and will tend to be attracted to jobs that provide them with a sense of purpose and meaning. They dislike hierarchy and generally prefer a flatter corporate structure. It will be interesting to see how workplaces develop and transition as these generations drive change.

A record of decisions and resolutions is attached to this report. All motions were debated and voted on with many being close showing a great variety of perspectives and priorities across delegates.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, the conference was a valuable opportunity for local government leaders to come together, share their experiences and insights, and explore new ways of working together to address the challenges facing their communities.