

**MINUTES OF MEETING (NO 120) OF THE NORTHERN SYDNEY REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF
COUNCILS HELD AT
RYDE COUNCIL
DEVLIN STREET, RYDE
16TH AUGUST 2007.**

*The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm
Clr Ivan Petch, Mayor, Ryde Council, extended a welcome to
NSROC Delegates*

QUORUM

The Chairman referred to Article 13.i) of the Constitution that provides:

A quorum at a meeting of the Organisation shall consist of a number being half of the number of Councils plus one.

Member Councils of NSROC include:

Hornsby	Hunter's Hill	Ku-ring-gai	
Lane Cove	North Sydney	Ryde	Willoughby

Councils represented on the evening included:

Hornsby	Hunter's Hill	Ku-ring-gai	
Lane Cove	North Sydney	Ryde	Willoughby

Accordingly, a quorum was present.

ATTENDANCE

Clr N Berman	Hornsby Council
Clr R Browne	Hornsby Council
Mr Robert Ball	General Manager, Hornsby Council
Clr S Hoopmann	Hunter's Hill Council
Mr B Smith	General Manager, Hunter's Hill Council
Clr E Malicki	Ku-ring-gai Council
Mr J McKee	General Manager, Ku-ring-gai Council
Mr S Head	Ku-ring-gai Council
Clr I Longbottom	Lane Cove Council
Mr P Brown	General Manager, Lane Cove Council
Clr N Ritten	North Sydney Council
Ms P Holloway	General Manager, North Sydney Council
Clr I Petch	Ryde Council
Clr E Wilde OAM	Ryde Council
Clr G O'Donnell	Ryde Council
Clr S Yedelian	Ryde Council
Mr M Whittaker	General Manager, Ryde Council
Mr R Newsome	Ryde Council
Clr P Reilly	Willoughby Council (Chair)
Mr D Johnson	NSROC Executive Director
Ms L Ridley	NSROC Executive Assistant

GUESTS

Mr Paul Lynch MP	Minister for Local Government
Ms Cecilia Anthony	Policy Advisor, Local Government

APOLOGIES

Clr F Findlay	Hornsby Council
Clr M Lyons	Hornsby Council
Clr R Sheerin	Hunter's Hill Council
Clr N Ebbeck	Ku-ring-gai Council
Clr R Tudge	Lane Cove Council
Clr G McCaffery	North Sydney Council
Clr T Fogarty	Willoughby Council
Mr J Owen	General Manager, Willoughby Council

675/07 **RESOLVED:** Moved: Clr I Longbottom Seconded: Clr E Wilde
That the Apologies be received.

CARRIED

Minutes of Meeting No 120 held 16th August 2007.

CHAIR

1. PRESENTATION BY PAUL LYNCH, MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

- I was asked before the meeting started whether I had a Local Government background.
- I spent two terms on Liverpool Council from 1987 to 1995. I was also chair of WSROC in the early 90's so I have not just a philosophic but also an emotional attachment to ROC's.
- I can respond to Mayor Petch by saying that I'm well aware of the delights of his Council area – I had close relatives living for many decades in Putney.
- I've been interested early in the period of being a Minister to meet as many people as I can. One of the measures of success of my portfolio will be whether local government regards itself as having a serious relationship with the State Government.
- It is vital that the local government sector and the State Government work closely together to develop a joint strategic approach to these issues if we are to have success.
- It is also important that councils work more closely together than many have done in the past.
- Often councils have seen each other as competitors rather than partners. For example, councils sometimes compete with each other for staff with specialised skills rather than figure out how such skills can be shared and these staff encouraged to assist others develop such skills.
- I am also concerned that some councils in metropolitan and regional areas continue to believe that closer working relationships between councils erodes local democracy. I continue to believe in the value of local councils understanding local issues and developing specific approaches to local issues.
- This is strengthened when local councils work with each other to develop innovative approaches to those issues councils have in common. Often this means that solutions can be developed that no one council, irrespective of their size, can develop on their own.
- On 27 August the second Strategic Alliance Network Conference will be held where councils from all over NSW will share their experience and lessons learnt in the development of the type of alliances and partnerships that I am talking about.
- A range of councils will present what they have learnt in forming alliances with each other. There will be practical suggestions and examples of collaborative practices and, importantly, how these partnerships are able to evaluate their effectiveness and demonstrate this to their communities.
- Let me thank Dominic, your Executive Director and Barry Smith, General Manager Hunters Hill Council in advance. They will be presenting at the conference.
- At this conference I will be launching a paper prepared by the Department of Local Government detailing many of the recent experiences of councils across NSW and providing useful information for councils on how to develop, manage, and evaluate these partnership arrangements.
- Now to a large extent I know that I am preaching to the converted.
- NSROC has for some years been an effective mechanism for joint planning.
- The NSROC Regional Social Report completed in June 2005 is an example of a joint strategy identifying critical social issues that impact on your communities.
- In particular this report identifies the lack of affordable housing impacting on the ability of low and middle-income families to live in the area. This has significant impacts on your community social fabric and the availability of essential skills and experience to meet local needs.
- These issues have also received considerable attention in the development of the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy by the Department of Planning.
- The NSROC Planning Group is an excellent example of councils working together to provide input into the development of the Strategy and developing a planning framework for the region.
- The Draft Northeast and Inner North Sub regional Strategies have now been released for public comment. They suggest specific targets for housing generally and specifically for affordable housing. I encourage councils to consider these issues further and provide

feedback to the Department of Planning. I also encourage councils to consider these issues further in their local decision-making.

- Affordable housing is a current topic with national attention. I know that it is nothing new for you in this part of Sydney. It is a complex issue which has not come about overnight. Nor will it be solved overnight. I have the view that local government has a role in this issue and I am taking a keen interest in the debate. Affordable housing underpins a sustainable community. Without safe and secure housing which meets the needs of all socio-economic groups, local communities and economies will struggle to provide the quality of life we all want and expect. Over coming months I will have more to say about this topic in the context of local government's role.
- I've had a meeting with the Director-General of the Department of Housing. Earlier this week I looked at some of the good work done at Waverley Council.
- The Northern Planners Professional Officers Group is another excellent example of how councils can work together to exchange technical planning information, review new planning policies and prepare submissions on planning reforms.
- Let me also acknowledge similar work you have undertaken in environmental planning, transport, procurement, people management and street lighting.
- All are important aspects of councils working together to meet common community expectations.
- You will all have read recent media reports suggesting that Sydney is over governed and calling for the amalgamation of councils. I have said previously and I repeat that I do not support the forced amalgamation of local councils. I'm happy to support agreed amalgamations, but since my time at WSROC I've been a skeptic about amalgamations that are forced.
- However, we all have a role in finding further productive ways to increase effectiveness and efficiency within the sector. Our communities demand it. The resource sharing initiatives that I mentioned earlier are one way of addressing this.
- You have heard me speak previously about reforms in the local government sector, including improved strategic planning and the development of an improved asset management framework. This work is progressing well and I appreciate the support and advice members of NSROC are giving the Department in developing the details of the framework.
- The Government is continuing its review of Red Tape to increase efficiency while preserving accountability. I look forward to your input into the Department's review of red tape within its control. It's important that we continue to remove processes that do not add value to our ultimate goal of providing services to our communities.
- Let me conclude by restating my strong belief that by working together, local councils have tremendous potential to develop creative approaches to complex issues.
- NSROC has already demonstrated this potential in the work you have undertaken to date. I commend you for your leadership, enthusiasm and commitment to addressing the challenges currently facing us all.

General discussion covered the following topics;

- Relationship between State and Local Government
- Benefits of ROCs
- Strategic Alliance Forum
- Affordable Housing
- No forced amalgamations
- Integrated Strategic Planning Process
- Asset Management
- Code of Conduct
- Private Certifiers
- Media attitudes to Local Government
- Popularly elected Mayors

