



CUMBERLAND COUNCIL

Council Meeting

Wednesday, 15 May 2019 at 6:30pm

Cumberland Council Chambers

Merrylands Service Centre, 16 Memorial Avenue, Merrylands

Councillor Contact Details

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Greystanes Ward

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Regents Park Ward

Clr Ned Attie	0419 583 254	Ned.Attie@cumberland.nsw.gov.au
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South Granville Ward

Clr Glenn Elmore (Deputy Mayor)	0418 459 527	Glenn.Elmore@cumberland.nsw.gov.au
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Wentworthville Ward

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Item No: MM05/19-5

MAYORAL MINUTE - EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY INCREASE

Author: Mayor Greg Cummings
File Number: SC339

SUMMARY

To Council,

Each year, the NSW Government collects payments from councils and insurers to fund emergency services agencies in NSW, with councils required to pay 11.7 per cent of the budget required by NSW Emergency Services. These charges are embedded in council rates and insurance premiums.

From 1 July 2019, the NSW Government plans to collect an additional \$160 million (in 2019/20) from NSW councils, communities and those paying insurance premiums to provide better workers' compensation coverage for volunteer and career firefighters who are diagnosed with one of 12 specific work-related cancers.

Councils were sent bills with a letter from Revenue NSW in May 2019, saying NSW council contributions will increase by \$19 million in 2019/20. The letter also foreshadowed increases in the following year, but not the amount.

Cumberland Council received an invoice from Revenue NSW for \$2,504,468.52 for its 2019/20 emergency services levy contribution. In comparison to 2018/19, this is an increase of \$83,589.72 (a 3.5% increase). In comparison to 2017/18, this is an increase of \$409,690.52 (a 19.6% cumulative increase in two years). Considering the fact that our rate capping is set at 2.7% per annum, this will mean Council will need to find additional funds and/or cut planned initiatives or services which further highlights the challenge when additional costs are shifted towards councils.

Council supports career and volunteer firefighters in NSW – as it does all emergency services workers and volunteers. Indeed, many NSW council staff and councillors are volunteers. We also support the Bill passed in November 2018 to address what was a workers' compensation shortfall.

However, the sector was at no point advised that it would be required to cover the cost via significant increases to the emergency services levy, or what this cost would be.

Proportional to Council revenue, the extra \$409,690.52 Cumberland Council is being asked to pay is a large amount and the impact of this unplanned cost will certainly be felt by the community.

Local Government NSW is calling upon the NSW Government to fund the first 12 months of this extra cost and work with local government to ensure the implementation of the funding mechanism is fairer into the future.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- a) **Write to the NSW Premier and NSW Interim Opposition Leader, NSW Minister for Customer Services, NSW Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Local Government and Shadow Minister for Local Government, and local state member/s to:**
 - i. **Call upon the NSW Government to fund the 12 months of this extra cost rather than requiring councils to find the funds at short notice when budgets have already been allocated;**
 - ii. **Explain how this sudden increase will impact council services / the local community;**
 - iii. **Highlight that councils were not warned of the increased cost until May 2019, despite the new laws being passed in November 2018;**
 - iv. **Explain that the poor planning and implementation of the increase is inconsistent with the Government's commitment to work in partnership with the sector; and**
 - v. **Ask the Government to work with local governments to redesign the implementation of the scheme to ensure it is fairer for councils and communities into the future.**

- b) **Copy the above letter to Local Government NSW.**

ATTACHMENTS

Nil