



THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

"What we want is nothing more than equity"

MEDIA RELEASE

27 March, 2024

HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Regional Crime Inquiry submissions now open

The Country Mayors Association of NSW (CMA) has welcomed the NSW Government's announcement of a new Inquiry into Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities, and urges community members to have their say.

The CMA's call for an inquiry came to address the dangerous increase in crime in regional and rural areas across the state.

CMA Chair and Gunnedah Mayor Jamie Chaffey said the statistics showed clearly there were disproportionate crime levels and fewer police resources in regional and rural New South Wales, and it was now up to community members to bring the full extent of the crisis to the attention of the State Government.

"It has been an enormous challenge to make this Inquiry a reality," Mayor Chaffey said.

"This is a great first step and now that we have the attention of our Members of Parliament, it is up to us all to make sure that we are sharing our lived experience and any suggestions we have about how to stop the severity and instances of crime.

"We also need to make it clear that there is a real need for adequate support for both victims and perpetrators that will lead to a safer community. We need to share the importance of pro-active policing, a change that can only happen with an increase in police numbers.

"We also need to provide any other information that you feel our elected Members of Parliament need to understand when they are making decisions that will affect our confidence in our own safety.

"Whether you have been impacted by crime, know someone who has, whether you work or have previously worked in related services, or come from another state or country that has implemented great working strategies, you need to make your voice heard."



THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

“What we want is nothing more than equity”

The CMA’s recent general meeting hosted top level speakers on regional crime at NSW Parliament House days after the announcement.

“Our six-month campaign paid off and the NSW Government announced the Parliamentary Inquiry into Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities,” Mayor Chaffey said.

“Our meeting saw presentations from the NSW Minister for Police, the Shadow Minister for Police, the Deputy Police Commissioner and President-Elect of the NSW Police Association.

“I accepted the praise we received from most of our special guests on behalf of our members for our regional NSW crime campaign as vindication for the important role of the Country Mayors Association of NSW – and the important issue of regional crime.

“The inquiry that the NSW Government has announced is not everything we hoped for, but the Minns Government has listened and responded, which the CMA commends.

“As Shadow Police Minister the Hon. Paul Toole told our meeting, this inquiry must get to the front lines of the regional crime battle and not remain safely holed up in Sydney. We encourage regional Councils to send submissions to the Inquiry members, including Mr Toole, asking that the inquiry conduct a hearing in their town and hear from locals in person.”

The meeting in Sydney included a presentation by Executive Director NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Jacki Fitzgerald.

CMA Deputy Chair and Temora Mayor Rick Firman AOM said the bureau’s data underpins the CMA’s recently updated Regional NSW Crime, Law and Order Report.

“The statistics and trends speak for themselves,” Mayor Firman said. “As Jacki Fitzgerald told our meeting, the data shows that regional NSW has far worse reported crime figures than Sydney.

“What we need is for policy makers and Government departments to get more than the numbers, to really understand what crime has done to people in our regions and what consequences or potential solutions are, when we do not feel safe in our own communities and our own homes.”

The CMA’s current Crime, Law and Order Report is online: <https://nswcountrymayors.com.au/publications/>

The submissions deadline for ‘[Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities](#)’ is 31 May 2024.

For further information, contact: Chairman CMA - Cr Jamie Chaffey on 0467 402 412 or Deputy Chairman CMA - Cr Rick Firman OAM on 0429 204 060

Caption: *Country Mayors Association Chair and Gunnedah Mayor Jamie Chaffey discussing the Community Safety in Regional Communities Inquiry with Shadow Police Minister, the Hon. Paul Toole.*