

# The LGSA conference wrap-up

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Eurobodalla  
Lei Parker

This week saw Mayors, Councillors and staff from across NSW attend the annual Local Government and Shires Association Conference 2017 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Sydney.



*Ten visible members of the outgoing LGNSW Board*

Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney Clover Moore welcomed guests from the dais of the Grand Ballroom.

The conference ran 170 programs and workshops with over 600 participants.

There was considerable discussion around the Proposed Code of Conduct that many thought applied unwarranted and additional standards to councillors that are not applied to State Government elected members.

Of note was a motion that Local Government NSW requests the NSW Government to reform the procedures in relation to Code of Conduct complaints against councillors by removal of the involvement of general managers and the creation of an independent watchdog to consider genuine complaints against councillors and prosecute frivolous or vexatious grievances.

A motion for minimum increase in rates of 3% was carried with one attendee tweeting - "Never stops amazing me that the government's rhetoric on LG reform never includes addressing rate pegging issue. So many of us are hamstrung by rate pegging constantly being below CPI"

Councillors heckled Acting Premier John Barilaro as he tried to justify the NSW stadiums multi-billion dollar outlay during his address. For the audience it just didn't work, and he received boo's for his efforts. Around the room were the rumbled tones of the words "Hospitals? Schools? Libraries? Transport?"



He did however add "we must put constitutional recognition of local government back on the agenda".

The room broke out in applause during a later presentation by Peter Primrose MLC Shadow Minister for Local Government when he reaffirmed NSW Labor's commitment to schools & hospitals rather than stadiums.



On the issue of amalgamations Peter Primrose pledged that a Labor Government will not force further amalgamations and would allow voluntary demerging.

Local Government Minister Gabrielle Upton announced a new uniform meeting code for councils, including mandatory webcasting.



“If it’s good enough for State Parliament it’s good enough for councils,” she said.

It was tweeted by several observers that it was extremely disappointing to have the Liberal Minister for Local Government address over 400 councillors and mayors throughout NSW at the annual local government conference and refuse to take any questions from delegates.

“Stop talking at us and start listening” one tweeted.



Recycling seemed to be a flowing theme through the conference with guest speaker Annabel Crabbe saying “In 10 years, we’ve enjoyed 6 PMs - the most effective recycling

scheme in Australia right now.” She observed however that “Chaos in Canberra does create opportunities for local democracy”

It was widely rumoured that a decision is expected in a few weeks on Labor's fight for the release of the mysterious KPMG report which has been the Coalition's justification for pulling apart communities across the State.

Linda Scott (Labor) was announced (though unofficially) as the next President of LGNSW.

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(As edited by SHHMC)