

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

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MAYOR CALLS FOR FAIR FUNDING FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council's mayor Cr Abb McAlister is calling on the Australian Government to restore proper funding for local councils as part of the Country Mayors Association of NSW's (CMA) 'Invest in Us' campaign.

The campaign urges the Commonwealth to return Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1% of total Commonwealth taxation revenue so councils can continue delivering the essential services and local infrastructure communities rely on.

Local government is the backbone of rural communities, but funding has not kept pace with increasing costs and demands.

"Local government is the backbone of our community. We maintain roads, parks, libraries, sporting facilities, waste services and more — but funding from the Federal Government has not kept up. Restoring Financial Assistance Grants to 1% would allow councils like ours to keep delivering the services our residents depend on." Cr McAlister said.

For many years, Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants have been reduced to around half of what they were intended to be. Most other federal programs are project-based and cannot support day-to-day operations.

The Country Mayors Association of NSW members across rural, remote and regional NSW are jointly advocating for change.

"This is about fairness. Rural councils don't ask for much — but we need the Federal Government to invest in us so we can invest in our communities." Cr McAlister added.

As part of the campaign, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council will:

- Share campaign messages with the community
- Display posters and information in Council venues
- Engage with local media and stakeholders
- Write to Federal representatives including the Prime Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Local Government and local Members of Parliament.

Residents can learn more about the campaign at www.countrymayors.com.au

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