

Media Release

16 April 2025

Put our communities first this federal election

Cowra Shire Council has called for all parties and candidates in this year's federal election to put our communities first and commit to increased funding for Australia's 537 local governments.

Mayor Paul Smith said "Councils are taking on more responsibilities every year, but federal funding hasn't kept up. Local governments like ours are being stretched thin, facing rising costs without sustainable support. We need long-term, reliable funding so we can continue delivering for our communities."

Cowra Shire Council has endorsed five national funding priorities for local government, which include:

- \$1.1 billion per year for enabling infrastructure to unlock housing supply
- \$500 million per year for community infrastructure
- \$600 million per year for safer local roads
- \$900 million per year for increased local government emergency management capability and capacity, and
- \$400 million per year for climate change adaptation.

This funding should be provided to all councils on a formula-basis – similar to the way Financial Assistance Grants and Roads to Recovery funding have been for many years – so that every Australian community benefits.

"Long-term, sustained funding helps our communities move beyond the pressures of short-term grant cycles and have meaningful conversations about where we want to go. With secure funding, we could progress important projects like improving our local road network and planning for future housing in a more strategic and measured way, rather than piecing them together year by year." Stated Mayor Smith.

Mayor Paul Smith also stated "Local challenges need local solutions. When councils are sustainably funded, we can deliver real, place-based outcomes that not only support our communities but contribute to national priorities like housing, climate resilience, and regional development. Every dollar invested in councils stays local — it creates jobs, boosts small businesses, and strengthens our economy from the ground up."

Ends