

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

**Organisation:** Inverell Shire Council

**Date Received:** 21 May 2024

Our Reference: S14.11.1/17

16 May 2024

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Mr Edmond Atalla MP  
Committee Chair  
Legislative Assembly  
Committee on Law and Safety

Dear Mr Atalla

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL & RURAL COMMUNITIES INQUIRY SUBMISSION TO HAVE INQUIRY HEARING CONDUCTED IN INVERELL**

In November 2023, Council resolved to support the Country Mayors Association of NSW (CMA) in their pursuit of a parliamentary inquiry into crime, law and order in regional NSW. At the time the CMA had produced a report which clearly demonstrated disproportionate crime levels and fewer police resources in regional and rural NSW.

At their meeting on the 22 March 2024 (attended by Inverell Shire Council's Mayor and General Manager) the CMA released their updated Crime, Law and Order report. The report included 2023 crime statistics as provided by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). The report makes for sobering reading. For the New England North West area, the rate of property crime was 1.9 times above the state average and violent crime 1.8 times above the state average for 2023. The report further broke down into local government areas crime rates per 100,000 population over a range of offences. Concerningly, Inverell is significantly above the state average for a range of offence categories including theft, break and enter, sexual assault, drug offences and domestic assault.

Also noting the recent crime statistics from BOSCAR, the NSW Premier on the 12 March announced a package of reforms and initiatives to support community safety and wellbeing, particularly in regional NSW. The package included legislative reform such as amending the Bail Act to include an additional bail test for youth charged with certain offences and the creation of a new offence for 'posting and boasting'. Other package components included a place-based response in Moree and a range of regional crime prevention initiatives.

The crime problem confronting Inverell Shire is not unique to this area and reflects a much broader social issue being experienced in rural and regional areas across the nation. It has been broadly acknowledged policing alone will not overcome this issue and it will require a multi-faceted approach involving each tier of government to develop both short term and long-term solutions. Whilst councils' sphere of influence on law and order matters is somewhat limited, continued advocacy to authorities and government to advance the interests of our community is obviously paramount.

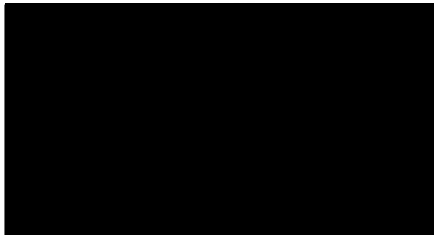
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Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall MP convened a Mayoral Roundtable meeting in Inverell on the 4 April 2024. Shadow Minister for Police and Committee on Law and Safety member, Paul Toole MP was also in attendance. A significant part of the meeting was dedicated to the crime pandemic confronting rural and regional NSW. Whilst Moree has been at the forefront of recent publicity around the matter, it was clear from those in attendance the issue was impacting on each of the Councils across the electorate. Mr Toole stressed the importance of having the Inquiry Committee conduct hearings in regional areas to provide the opportunity for community members to tell their story and put forward suggestions. Mayor Paul Harmon advocated for Inverell to host a hearing to facilitate an opportunity for council representatives and residents from the Northern Tablelands to address the committee. There was consensus from those in attendance at the Mayoral Roundtable for Inverell Shire to make a submission in this regard. Formal letters in support of having an Inquiry Hearing conducted in Inverell have subsequently been received from the Member for Northern Tablelands and Northern Tablelands Councils and are **attached** for the attention of the Committee.

I welcome the opportunity to host an Inquiry Committee hearing in Inverell and look forward to contributing to the process along with my Northern Tablelands counterparts.

Please note that in addition to Council's request to host an Inquiry Committee hearing, Inverell Shire Council will also be making a separate submission to the Inquiry regarding the level and impact of crime in the Inverell Shire.

Yours faithfully



**CR PAUL HARMON**

**MAYOR**

Enc.



Hon. **Adam Marshall** MP  
MEMBER FOR NORTHERN TABLELANDS

Ref:km:isc

Cr Paul Harmon  
Mayor  
Inverell Shire Council  
Email: [council@inverell.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@inverell.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Cr Harmon

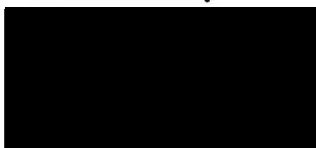
*Paul,*

I write in response to your letter of 26 April regarding your request that the Rural and Regional Crime Inquiry committee visit Inverell as part of their investigations.

I have made representations on your behalf to Committee Chair, Rural and Regional Crime Inquiry Mr Edmond Atalla MP indicating my full support of your request that the committee visit and meet with Inverell locals about the impacts and the concerns they have around the incidence and severity of crime in the regions.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and please be assured that my office will write to you again once we have received a response from the committee.

Yours sincerely



**HON. ADAM MARSHALL MP**  
Member for Northern Tablelands

06 MAY 2024





EMBRACING CHANGE, BUILDING ON HISTORY

## Office of the Mayor

265 Grey Street  
Glen Innes NSW 2370



Council Ref: RB/dd

Cr Paul Harmon  
Mayor  
Inverell Shire Council  
By email: [REDACTED]

2 May 2024

Dear Cr Harmon

### Re: Crime, Law and Order in Regional NSW

I am writing on behalf of the Glen Innes Severn Council to express our full support that a hearing of the Inquiry into Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities, be held in Inverell.

We firmly believe that a hearing in Inverell is essential for gathering valuable insights from residents, the local business community, and both serving and retired officers. Their collective knowledge and experience are indispensable in understanding the unique challenges faced by our communities.

An Inquiry of this nature promises to yield well-informed findings and recommendations, which are crucial for implementing effective and sustainable safety measures.

We are hopeful that the outcomes of this Inquiry will significantly contribute to the betterment of our region, ensuring a safer and more secure environment for all who reside here.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**Cr Rob Banham**  
**MAYOR**

*Glen Innes Severn Council acknowledges and pays respect to the Ngarabul people as the traditional custodians of this land, their elders past, present and emerging and to Torres Strait Islander people and all First Nations people.*

Correspondence to: **The Mayor PO Box 61 Glen Innes NSW 2370**  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Website: [www.gisc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gisc.nsw.gov.au)  
ABN: 81 365 002 718





## Office of the Mayor

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E: council@uralla.nsw.gov.au

32 Salisbury St, Uralla NSW 2358

PO Box 106, Uralla NSW 2358

ABN: 55 868 272 018

Responsible Officer: EA

In reply, please quote: UO/24/1510

1 May 2024

Parliament of New South Wales

Legislative Assembly Committee on Law Safety

C/- Inverell Shire Council [as part their submission]

Email: [REDACTED]

The Honourable Edmund Atalla, MLA

Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism

Dear Sir,

### **Community safety in regional and rural communities**

Uralla Shire Council supports Inverell Shire Council in its proposal to host an Inquiry hearing on Community Safety in Regional and Rural Communities within the New England Local Government Area (LGA) at Inverell.

This initiative would provide an outstanding opportunity for both the community and business sectors of the New England region to directly contribute their insights, experiences and ideas during the Inquiry hearing.

A hearing in Inverell would assist to ensure that the ultimate conclusions and recommendations of the Committee accurately reflect and encompass the challenges and circumstances specific to the New England area.

We eagerly await formal approval from the Inquiry to proceed with hosting the hearing in Inverell.

[REDACTED]  
Robert Bell

Mayor, Uralla Shire.

**Sharon K. Stafford**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 May 2024 2:23 PM  
**To:** Sharon K. Stafford  
**Subject:** RE: Crime Law & Order in Regional NSW

Good Afternoon Sharon,  
Mayor Coupland would like to commend Mayor Harmon and Inverell Council in making a submission to the NSW Government to have the Crime, Law and Order Inquiry hearing in Inverell.  
Please accept this email as Mayor Coupland's formal support to have the Inquiry hearing conducted in Inverell.  
Kindest Regards

**Melissa Hault**  
Executive Officer to the Mayor  
P [REDACTED] F 02 6772 9275

W [armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au](http://armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au)

135 Rusden Street | PO Box 75A Armidale NSW 2350

**ARMIDALE**  
Regional Council

SEASON'S GREETINGS  
HAPPY NEW YEAR &

**From:** Sharon K. Stafford  
**Sent:** Monday, April 29, 2024 2:32 PM  
**To:** Sam Coupland  
**Subject:** Crime Law & Order in Regional NSW

Dear Cr Coupland  
Please find attached correspondence from Cr Paul Harmon for your attention.  
Kind regards  
Sharon Stafford  
**Sharon Stafford**

**Governance & Executive Services Coordinator**  
PO Box 138 Inverell NSW 2360

Te [REDACTED]



**INVERELL**  
SHIRE COUNCIL



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Phone: (02) 6757 3222  
Email: [council@mpsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@mpsc.nsw.gov.au)  
Reference:



20 May 2024

The Mayor  
Inverell Shire Council  
144 Otho Street  
Inverell NSW 2360

Dear Mayor Harmon,

**CRIME, LAW AND ORDER IN REGIONAL NSW**

I refer to your letter dated 26 April 2024 in relation to the NSW Government's Parliamentary Inquiry into Community Safety in Regional and Rural communities.

Please be advised our Council formally supports Inverell Shire Council's proposal to having a session of the Inquiry being held in Inverell.

Yours sincerely



Mark Johnson  
**MAYOR**

**Sharon K. Stafford**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 May 2024 3:01 PM  
**To:** Sharon K. Stafford  
**Cc:** Cr John Coulton; Bronwyn Wilson  
**Subject:** Crime Law & Order in Regional NSW

Dear Sharon

I am writing to confirm this Council's support for your Council's request to the subject Inquiry to hold a hearing in Inverell.

Inverell and Moree are two locations that will hopefully benefit from the recommendations emanating from this Inquiry. It is very appropriate for the Inquiry to hold its hearings in locations where the communities are suffering the consequences of youth crime.

Please forward this email of support onto the appropriate body.

Regards

Max Eastcott  
General Manager  
Gwydir Shire Council  
[REDACTED]



21 May 2024

Clr Paul Harmon, Mayor  
Inverell Shire Council  
PO Box 138  
Inverell NSW 2360

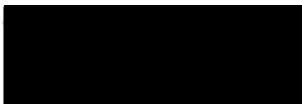
Dear Clr Harmon

**Letter of Support for Parliamentary Inquiry into Community Safety in  
Regional & Rural Communities hearing held in Inverell**

As Mayor of Walcha Council, I wish to extend Council's full support for an Inquiry hearing to be held in Inverell.

The Inquiry hearing would avail the Legislative Assembly's Committee on Law & Safety a direct face-to-face input from a community who is facing a multitude of youth crime. The residents and business community would provide experience and knowledge on youth crime and how it is affecting their lives – an invaluable resource on community safety in regional and rural communities.

Yours sincerely



Clr Eric H Noakes  
Mayor