



# The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

## Premier of NSW

### Minister for Western Sydney

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Monday 8 April 2013

### **CLOSER STATE-LOCAL TIES AS PREMIER AND MINISTER SIGN AGREEMENT WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW**

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Local Government Minister Don Page today signed a new agreement with Local Government NSW to guide relations between the NSW Government and councils across the State.

The *Intergovernmental Agreement to Guide NSW State-Local Government Relations on Strategic Partnerships* was signed by the Premier, the Minister and Joint Presidents of Local Government NSW Keith Rhoades AFSM and Ray Donald.

Mr O'Farrell said the agreement will usher in a new era of cooperation between state and local government – a relationship which had been allowed to wane during 16 years of Labor.

"I am pleased today to be signing this Agreement on behalf of the NSW State Government with Local Government NSW – it's a commitment to work together to achieve strong communities through partnerships," said Mr O'Farrell.

"The recent merger of the local government and shires associations creates a stronger voice for local government in NSW, and an organisation that is better able to meet the needs of councils and work in partnership with the State Government."

Mr Page said: "This Government is working hard to strengthen local government. We recognise that we cannot, and should not, achieve this alone. The Intergovernmental Agreement will serve to formalise our already positive relationship with Local Government NSW."

"In signing this Agreement, we commit to work together as drivers of change and improvement," Mr Page said.

"Our consultation and communication will be open and based on mutual trust and respect. Issues in local government will be addressed with a focus on continuous improvement, innovation and the interests of the community."

Joint President of Local Government NSW, Cr Keith Rhoades AFSM, welcomed the Inter-governmental Agreement, saying that: "This Agreement puts the people of NSW first, with both levels of government committing to work in partnership to strengthen and build communities, with an emphasis on consultation early and often with the local government sector."

“Our NSW communities will be better off as new responsibilities will no longer be shifted onto councils without the NSW Government consulting first, and considering the financial impact it will have on councils and the other services they provide.”

Cr Ray Donald, Joint President of Local Government NSW said that in the past there had been a lack of dialogue between State and local government, and this IGA signals a new way of working, saying that: “The new IGA allows for more discussions in the early stages of the development of new plans, and well in advance of major changes.”

“We have been asking for this IGA for a long time, and the signing of today’s Inter-governmental Agreement is a truly historic event, marking the improved relationship between both spheres of government in NSW.”

The Intergovernmental Agreement has a number of key features, including:

- Agreed principles that will guide State–Local Government relations, and an articulation of roles and responsibilities
- Provision for a biannual meeting with the Premier, the Minister for Local Government and Local Government NSW to discuss strategic initiatives that impact on both parties; and a biannual meeting with the Minister for Local Government and Local Government NSW will be held, to discuss the strategic issues facing local government
- Provision for a biannual dialogue hosted by the Chief Executive of the Division of Local Government, to be held between Local Government NSW, the Local Government Managers Australia (NSW), and Agency Heads of key NSW State agencies with a strong and direct relationship with NSW councils, to discuss the management of emerging issues
- A provision addressing cost–shifting.

Mr Page said: “This is an exciting year for local government.”

“A range of reform initiatives stemming from the Destination 2036 initiative are being implemented, including the Independent Local Government Review Panel that was established at the request of the former Associations, as well as the work of the Local Government Acts Taskforce.

“With the signing of this Agreement, we will be well placed to work with local government in this challenging and rewarding year ahead.”

The Agreement is available for download on the Division of Local Governments website at [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)