

**SUBJECT: MAYORAL MINUTE - EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY****FROM:** The Mayor**EDMS #:** 23/256956

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I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about the increase to the Emergency Services Levy and the ramifications it has on Camden Council and our community.

As you would all be aware, the Emergency Services Levy is a cost imposed on local councils and insurance policy holders to fund the emergency services budget in NSW.

There are 128 local councils in NSW who pay almost 12 per cent of this cost and, for the 2023-24 financial year, the levy increase amounts to almost \$76 million. This brings the total cost imposed on the local government sector to \$219 million next year. For us at Camden, the levy has increased by more than \$1 million, bringing our total contribution to almost \$2.2 million.

All local councils, including Camden, strongly support a well-funded emergency services sector and the critical contribution of emergency services workers and volunteers. However, this increase is incredibly challenging for a number of reasons. It will need to be funded on a recurrent basis, which will limit Council from providing for our growing community, by redirecting resources to cover the levy increase. The timing is also a challenge, as it has come so late in the budgeting cycle, well after we have finalised our draft budget and placed it on public exhibition.

Local Government NSW has raised these serious concerns with the NSW Government and is seeking the support of councils across NSW in amplifying this advocacy.

I'd like to call on my fellow Councillors to support these representations to the State Government in response to these significant increases so we're still able to ensure we're providing the best possible services, infrastructure and provisions for our community.

**RECOMMENDED****That Council:**

- i. call on the Treasurer, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Minister for Local Government, and local State Members to take immediate action to:**
  - (a) restore the Emergency Services Levy subsidy;**
  - (b) decouple the Emergency Services Levy from the rate peg to enable councils to recover the full cost; and**
  - (c) develop a fairer, more transparent and financially sustainable method of funding critically important emergency services.**
  
- ii. write to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal advising of the financial sustainability impact of the increase in the Emergency Services Levy.**