



CENTRAL NSW
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Approved by: Cr Bill West, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Cowra Council

Centroc supports keeping Water Utilities Local for their communities

The Centroc Board has responded angrily to the suggestion that the performance of Council owned and managed local water utilities in regional NSW is a function of the current structure of Local Government.

“This misinformation perpetuated through a number of reviews of Local Government local water utilities has previously been discredited by the Productivity Commission and must be challenged”, said Cr Bill West, Chair of Centroc, Mayor of Cowra Council.

The recently released Infrastructure Australia 15 Year Plan says that water quality in parts of regional Australia does not meet relevant drinking standards and that reform such as the amalgamation of local government and shared service arrangements are necessary to achieve the scale and financial capacity for some local governments to meet their infrastructure responsibilities.

“The fact is that Councils do an outstanding job of providing affordable best practice compliant water and sewerage services to communities in regional NSW while facing enormous challenges of meeting ever increasing regulatory burdens with ageing infrastructure, climate variability, population changes and skills shortages,” said Cr West.

In its latest Performance Monitoring Report for NSW Water Utilities, the NSW Government reported that in 2013-2014 the public drinking water supply for 99.9% of the urban population in regional NSW complied with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, as did all of the regional utilities.

“The suggestion that service levels could be raised through aggregation or a single water provider is nonsense and would do little more than further erode services by taking them out of the hands of local communities,” said Cr West.

“We are already feeling the effects of the loss of local management of our electricity. The last thing we want to see is our local water utilities taken out of our control with the increased costs to our communities going out of the region.”

“Partnerships such as the Centroc Water Utilities Alliance are a great example of Councils working together to ensure efficient compliance based delivery of critical water and sewerage services to our local communities at a reasonable cost to our ratepayers” said Cr West.

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For media enquiry: For comment please contact Jenny Bennett 0428 690 935