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For immediate release

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

Centroc calls for discussions on Joint Organisation efficiency to be grounded in fact

“While we thank Kevin Humphries, Member for Barwon for his bouquet in his recent e-newsletter on the potential of councils working collaboratively, the figures of 30-40% efficiency gains need to be challenged,” said Cr Bill West, Mayor of Cowra and Chair of Centroc

“Central NSW Councils (Centroc) was selected as one of 5 Pilot Joint Organisations. No Pilot looked at efficiency gains formally as part of the State led Pilot process. In fact the whole reform agenda, from the State’s perspective, has had little interest in efficiency and effectiveness, focussing instead on scale and capacity,” said Cr West.

“In our region our Councils have been in the business of delivering efficiencies through working together for decades. We have been tracking cost savings in particular of some of our programming for 5 years. We have saved our members net \$3m in the past 5 years in cost savings through procuring collaboratively. The totality of Councils budgets across our region is over \$500m per annum, our \$3m over 5 years is a fraction of 1%. Sure we could do more and hope to do more, but even using generous estimates, we will not realise 5% per annum of total Council expenditure,” said Cr West.

“The Local Government reform agenda needs to be grounded in two things

1. Evidence based facts and
2. The aspirations of our local communities

Our Pilot Joint Organisation has shown some real potential for better service delivery by a more collaborative approach by State, Federal and Local Government in our region. This could realise more effectiveness and efficiency, especially if we look to our communities to determine their needs for spending instead of taking the existing centralised approach of providing services that government thinks we need. We are still a very long way from optimising what this might be. We have learned though, that any future regional organisations of Councils must be owned by the communities through their Councils” said Cr West.



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“We will keep working together and with any other State agency or other organisation that has the interests of our communities at heart, whether our regional groupings of Councils are mandatory or voluntary. At the same time, it is important to understand the limitations of what can be achieved and how the value of our activities as Councils working collaboratively can be optimised,” said Cr West.

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