



CENTRAL NSW
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MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Approved by: Cr Ken Keith, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Parkes Shire Council

Centroc selected as Joint Organisation in NSW local government reform.

Central NSW Councils (Centroc) has been selected as one of only five regional pilot Joint Organisations to assist the NSW Government strengthen and reform local government.

Joint Organisations are a key component of the State Government's "Fit for the Future" local government reform package, designed to unite councils in defined regions to strategize regional priorities for their communities.

NSW Minister for Local Government, Paul Toole, announced the Hunter, Illawarra, Namoi and Riverina regions would joint Central NSW (Centroc) as pilot Joint Organisations in 2015.

Centroc Chair and Mayor of Parkes, Cr Ken Keith, and Deputy Chair and Mayor of Cowra, Cr Bill West, will travel to Sydney next Monday 17 November to join fellow Joint Organisation representatives to start negotiating the details of the pilot program.

"This is a golden opportunity for our region to take a pro-active role in strong, positive local government reform," said Cr Keith. "It provides us with sustainability and strength of numbers, yet retains our sense of community, regional identities and local representation."

"Centroc welcomes the opportunity to work with the State and other Regional Organisations of Councils to build on the successful collaboration between Councils undertaken in this region for the past 30 years."

"Centroc will work to strengthen what we already have, not take away from it," said Cr Keith. "Joint Organisations are not amalgamations, they are a league of councils."

(continued...)



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Centroc represents over 220,000 people over an area of more than 70,000 square kilometres comprising the Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Boorowa, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Upper Lachlan, Weddin, Young and Central Tablelands Water. Centroc is the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional priorities, facilitating regional co-operation and sharing knowledge, expertise and resources.

Over the years, Centroc has won many awards and achieved considerable success in regional collaboration, procurement and advocacy, including the creation of Netwaste and the Centroc Water Utilities Alliance. In the past financial year, Centroc's return on investment in grant funding was ten to one.

"From Centroc's perspective, Joint Organisations are all about collaborating with all of our members in an informed way to bring change that has a net benefit to our communities," said Deputy Chair Cr Bill West.

Eleven applications to pilot Joint Organisations were received by the State Government, covering 14 regions across NSW. Given the strong interest in participating in a pilot expressed by councils, as well as the high quality of the applications, the Government will consider the possibility of initiating further pilots prior to the proposed State-wide roll out in 2016.

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Image attached: Mayors and General Managers of Centroc met in Canberra to discuss regional priorities with Federal Members in August 2014.

For media enquiry: For comment please contact Ken Keith 0428 669 482 or Jenny Bennett 0428 690 935