



CENTRAL NSW  
COUNCILS

**CENTROC**

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

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Approved by: Cr Phyllis Miller, Chair of Centroc

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## **Chair of Centroc says, “Leave our water alone”.**

Cr Phyllis Miller, Chair of Centroc and Mayor of Forbes, is angry that Infrastructure Australia had engaged consultants to conduct an audit of the water quality and supply of towns across Australia without consulting the very organisations that provide the service, Local Government. “This is the Murray Darling Basin approach all over again!”

The audit focused on towns with populations between 2,000 and 15,000 with a reticulated water supply. The recently released review has identified a number of recommendations.

“One of the key recommendations in the report is the reform of the governance structure of regional water utilities in NSW and Queensland,” said Cr Miller. “What is proposed is the corporatisation of non-metropolitan water utilities in New South Wales and the transfer of ownership to State Government Water Corporations, not dissimilar to what was done with the electricity industry,” said Cr Miller.

Cr Miller said, “Without being provided any further information from the federal government, councils are concerned as to what will happen to their water assets into the future, as they are critical to the development of any community.”

Cr Miller said, “I am totally against an asset strip of water from our community control. We have seen the debacle and massive price hikes with electricity in NSW with the involvement of State Government and we don’t want a repeat of this. The fact is Centroc councils deliver water services to high quality standards and a cost which is comparatively low.”

“The review clearly states that significantly more work is required to ensure utilities servicing regional communities are operating commercially, which includes a return on investment and payment of a dividend back to the owner, this will potentially increase the price of water significantly,” said Cr Miller.

The Chair of Centroc went on to say “we are working co-operatively with our neighbours delivering the Centroc Water Security Study recommendations that have

won the national and prestigious Engineers' Australia Award. How can we be national leaders on the one hand at the Federal level and not good enough on the other?"

"The next Centroc meeting is on 24 February and I am already contacting my fellow Mayors so we can tackle this head on," said Cr Miller.

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