



MEDIA RELEASE

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Approved by: Cr Kevin Beatty, Chair of Central NSW Joint Organisation, Mayor of Cabonne Council

Wyangala Must Proceed

In response to the recently announced Infrastructure NSW *State Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2044: Staying Ahead*, which among other things recommended stopping work on a significant number of critical projects for this region, the Mayors of the region have expressed deep concern for water security.

Infrastructure NSW, back in their 2014 State Infrastructure Strategy, identified that the Lachlan has been one of the priority catchments for both Flood Management and Water Security.

"This region has invested decades of work. The NSW Government has committed to this project and the State has invested millions of dollars and years of preparation that will just be lost if we stop now," said Cr John Medcalf OAM, Mayor of Lachlan.

While dam construction in regional NSW have been recommended to be mothballed, INSW recommends that raising the dam wall at Warragamba ought to proceed.

"We know that with climate change there will be bigger storm events and longer droughts. Communities affected by drought and flood along the Lachlan must have their dam wall raised at Wyangala for the same reasons that Warragamba needs to have its wall raised.," said Cr Bill West Mayor of Cowra

"Wyangala is also essential for flood mitigation. Having the Newell Highway closed for 6 weeks due to flooding is surely a call to action on dam wall raising. The 2016 cost the nation at least \$150m in productivity on the Newell and not a thing has been done to help the situation since. All of the businesses along the Lachlan are significantly financially impacted every flood," said Cr Phyllis Miller OAM, Mayor of Forbes.

"Given that the Lachlan is a terminal system, here is also potential to leverage the extra water security that dam wall raising will provide for growth in the agricultural sector and potential for high value and value add in production," said Cr Ken Keith OAM, Mayor of Parkes.

Other recommendations in the INSW report include progressing the priority infrastructure identified in the Regional Water Strategies which are slated for completion in the second half of this year.

"This region is keen to get on with the work to ensure the infrastructure is in place for water security through the next drought. It seems strange to be talking about these things in such an incredibly wet year – but having lived through the past drought we know that it takes a long time to progress the infrastructure and other solutions for our urban communities," said Cr Mark Kellam, Mayor of Oberon and Deputy Chair of Central NSW Joint Organisation

"Central NSW Councils have won national awards for our work on water security. We know what our options are both in terms of infrastructure and management solutions. With all of the water saving, sharing and multi source approaches -quite simply - we need more storage. We have been working with the State on various options for decades. Raising the wall at Wyangala has been identified as the option to progress and we ought just get on with it as the security in the Lachlan is well below other catchments," said Cr Kevin Beatty, Mayor of Cabonne and Chair of Central NSW Joint Organisation

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