



CENTRAL NSW  
JOINT ORGANISATION

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Approved by: Cr Phyllis Miller, Central NSW Joint Organisation Board member, Mayor of Forbes Shire Council

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### **Country Mayors Welcome Minister's Commitment to Local Water Utilities remaining in public hands.**

Meeting at Parliament House today, Country Mayors for the Central NSW region have welcomed the Minister for Water, Rose Jackson's commitment to Local Water Utilities remaining in public hands.

Responding to a question from Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor of Forbes regarding Local Government ownership and management of Local Water Utilities, the Minister has said that Local Government will retain control of their Local Water Utilities and that she will consult with members on their constitutional protection.

"This is great news for the 90 Councils currently delivering Local Water Utility services to communities across regional NSW. More than that, its great news for the people of regional NSW," said Cr Miller.

"Councils' Water Utilities operate under a comprehensive regime of health, environment and economic regulation within a stringent performance measurement framework outlined by the Department of Planning and the Environment, Water," said Cr Miller.

"Regional NSW water utilities perform well in terms of national standards in delivering services in a safe, secure, efficient and affordable manner and have demonstrated their ability to do so through some of the most challenging conditions," said Cr Miller.

"Given the great diversity in geographical conditions across regional NSW, Councils ensure an integrated, locally appropriate and most cost-effective approach to water supply and sewerage management and ultimately the best outcomes for communities," said Cr Miller.

"Local Water Utilities in regional NSW have a responsibility to cover all costs and provide a positive return on investment to their local Council owner. The bigger problem in the current climate is pricing and affordability for communities to pay for services."

"Where institutional ownership arrangements are critical and have significant implications for the financial sustainability of Councils and for local and regional economies and employment, this must include a broader conversation about needs-based funding that recognises that quality secure water is a basic human right and that looks at funding for infrastructure and planning through a regional lens," said Cr Miller.

"There is so much to be gained through having these broader conversations about how water is managed between State, Federal and Local Government."

"We thank the Minister for her commitment to working with regional NSW Councils on enshrining public ownership of regional Local Water Utilities in the constitution and look forward to working with the NSW Government on the best outcomes for regional NSW communities," said Cr Miller.

**ENDS**

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**For media enquiry contact CNSWJO Board member, Cr Phyllis Miller, Mayor of Forbes 0419 600 877**