



## PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

### Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation

#### Answers to supplementary questions: Country Mayors Association

1. How could the state government better support councils in their long-term strategic planning for water infrastructure?
  - Longer term certainty around availability of funding programs
  - Funding programs that can be used for strategic and planning works, eg feasibility assessments for different solutions to meet a particular service need
  - Adequate consideration of longer term impacts of Government standards/policy/legislation changes on Council long term water and sewer plans
2. How could the strategic planning of infrastructure upgrades be better managed to accommodate the unique needs of regional councils?
  - Considering the long term benefits of investment in rural and regional water supplies linked to housing growth would be an opportunity recognising that often the scale and rate of development means a need for staged upgrades.
3. What do you see as the main drivers or pressures behind the potential privatisation of local water utilities?
  - One pressure is that the assets used to provide the services are often long lived assets and some private investors (including super funds) see them as an asset base to create investor value out of over a long period of time without reinvesting adequate capital.
4. What do you see as the most beneficial aspects of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program and what aspects should be continued?
  - Any funding programs provided to support capital investment in rural and regional water and sewer supplies is extremely valuable. The risk based approach is a good basis for decision making when considering services that have high risk consequences to the community and environment.
  - Funding programs that support growth infrastructure in combination with augmentation would assist in growing rural and regional areas, keep the cost of living and housing down and could take pressure off metropolitan areas to meet growth demand.
5. How does the new Regulatory and Assurance Framework for Local Water Utilities support LWUs to address risks and strategic challenges effectively and efficiently? Are there areas where the Framework could be improved?
  - It is acknowledged that there are important quality standards to be met and reported against to ensure public and environmental health and safety however there is often a level of duplication in requirements across agencies

- Government could undertake a cross agency review of reporting and data collection requirements to remove duplication and better assess value for effort, ie be clear on why certain things are being reported

