

**Submission
No 14**

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROTECTING LOCAL WATER UTILITIES
FROM PRIVATISATION**

Organisation: Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Date Received: 27 October 2023



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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27 October 2023

Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Subject: Goulburn Mulwaree Council submission – October 2023
Inquiry into how the Government can prevent and stop privatisation of local water utilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the protection of local water utilities from privatisation.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council covers an area of 3,223 square kilometres making it approximately 1.5 times the size of the Australian Capital Territory. The Goulburn Mulwaree LGA has a total population of approximately 33,000, with two water and wastewater supply systems in Goulburn and Marulan respectively. Goulburn has approximately 11,000 water connections, while Marulan has approximately 500 water connections, with a similar amount of sewer connections for each town.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council currently manages water and wastewater infrastructure including dams, water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, water reservoirs, pump stations and reticulation mains. We are also currently about to commission an effluent reuse system to drought proof our sporting facilities. This infrastructure is operated and maintained by 43 full time staff. This includes a director, managers, technical staff, administrative support staff, supervisors, team leaders and operators.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council supports protection against the privatisation of water utilities throughout Regional NSW, and specifically for Goulburn Mulwaree Council's water business. Our Council manages our own systems and strongly believes there are better results for the community when the system is operated and managed by local Councils.

There is no driver from our perspective for the privatisation of any LWU. While difficult to always recruit staff, Council has the resources to provide this service at a very high standard to our community. The private sector, unlike Council, needs to make a profit. Although Council is able to adequately cover the costs to operate and replace infrastructure, the income generated would not be enough to satisfy a private entity, and privatisation would likely result in increased costs to the community in order to generate a suitable profit. With the recent natural events occurring within the last 5 years, such as severe drought followed by heavy and sustained rainfall, a private entity would struggle to operate Council's water and wastewater supply systems and would require the same State and Federal Government funding that Council would require.

Every community in NSW deserves safe, reliable, and affordable water and sewerage services. Small communities deserve equitable access to these critical and essential services. Local government is best positioned to deliver these services in regional NSW.

Developing a new alternative funding model for regional Local Water Utilities would represent a transformational opportunity for regional communities in NSW, such as Goulburn and Marulan. The benefits from state investment in budget support for water and sewerage services as well as broader capital works subsidies will greatly assist regional communities and will ultimately flow back to the state through improved economic development.

Council does not support the privatisation of local water utilities in New South Wales.

Yours sincerely



Aaron Johansson
Chief Executive Officer



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