

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Central NSW Councils (Centroc)

Name: Cr Bill West

Date received: 16/06/2015

Inquiry into the 'Fit for the Future' reform agenda

June 2015



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Centroc's Mission is to be recognised as the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional positions and priorities for Central NSW whilst providing a forum for facilitating regional co-operation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources; effectively nurturing sustainable investment and infrastructure development.

www.centroc.com.au

15 June 2015

Reference bw:vp 061515

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 6
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

To whom it may concern,

Re: Inquiry into the 'Fit for the Future' reform agenda

Central NSW Councils (Centroc) represents over 243,000 people covering an area of more than 72,500sq kms comprising the Local Government Areas of Bathurst, Blayney, Boorowa, Cabonne, Cowra, Forbes, Lachlan, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Upper Lachlan, Weddin, Young and Central Tablelands Water.

Centroc's vision is to be recognised as vital to the sustainable future of NSW and Australia.

Its mission is to be recognised as the lead organisation advocating on agreed regional positions and priorities for Central NSW whilst providing a forum for facilitating regional cooperation and sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources.



Centroc has two core objectives:

1. Regional Sustainability - Encourage and nurture suitable investment and infrastructure development throughout the region and support members in their action to seek from Governments financial assistance, legislative and/or policy changes and additional resources required by the Region.
2. Regional Cooperation and Resource Sharing – Contribute to measurable improvement in the operational efficiency and effectiveness of Member Councils through facilitation of the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources and, where appropriate, the aggregation of demand and buying power.

Fit for the Future



Centroc has been selected as one of five regional pilot Joint Organisations to assist the NSW Government strengthen and reform local government.

The Centroc Board is made up of the 32 Mayors and General Managers of its member Councils who determine priority for the region. These priorities are then progressed via sponsoring Councils.

For more advice on Centroc programming and priorities, please go to our website

<http://www.centroc.com.au>

Please be aware that individual Councils will be making separate submissions which may vary in part or in whole with the advice following. Individual Councils will have particular circumstances with regard to Council Fit for the Future Proposals and this advice does not supersede that of member Councils. This advice is provided alongside that of Centroc members.

The Centroc Board has given consideration to the questions as provided by the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 6 and provides the following responses.

(a) the New South Wales Government's 'Fit for the Future' reform agenda.

Centroc has made a number of submissions with regard to the reform agenda. These are attached.

(b) the financial sustainability of the local government sector in New South Wales, including the measures used to benchmark local government as against the measures used to benchmark State and Federal Government in Australia.

Please see Centroc Submission 25 May 2015 Feedback to IPART on its Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals

(c) the performance criteria and associated benchmark values used to assess local authorities in New South Wales.

Please see Centroc Submission 25 May 2015 Feedback to IPART on its Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals

(d) the scale of local councils in New South Wales.

Please see individual council responses

(e) the role of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in reviewing the future of local government in New South Wales, assisted by a South Australian commercial consultant.

Please see Centroc Submission 25 May 2015 Feedback to IPART on its Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals

(f) the appropriateness of the deadline for 'Fit for the Future' proposals,
(g) costs and benefits of amalgamations for local residents and businesses.

Some commentary in this regard is in the attached submissions to the Reform Agenda

(h) evidence of the impact of forced mergers on council rates drawing from the recent Queensland experience and other forced amalgamation episodes.

Some commentary in this regard is in the attached submissions to the Reform Agenda

(i) evidence of the impact of forced mergers on local infrastructure investment and maintenance.

Please see individual council responses

(j) evidence of the impact of forced mergers on municipal employment, including aggregate redundancy costs.

Please see individual council responses

(k) the known and or likely costs and benefits of amalgamations for local communities.

Please see individual council responses

(l) the role of co-operative models for local government including the 'Fit for the Futures' own Joint Organisations, Strategic Alliances, Regional Organisations of Councils, and other shared service models, such as the Common Service Model.

Please find attached

- Centroc Submission 17 October 2014 Centroc EOI to be a pilot JO
- a recent JO Pilot Update
- the Annual Report for Centroc for the 2013/2014 financial year and
- Correspondence to Lachlan Shire Council 5 June 2015 Support a future Centroc JO could provide as part of the Lachlan Shire Council Fit for Future application.

Centroc has a proud history of providing service to its member Councils and through them to the communities of Central NSW. The value of Councils working together is demonstrable; see for example the advice in the most recent Annual Report.

The work Centroc is undertaking as a Pilot is predicated on making NSW more competitive. It builds on Centroc's proud history and to date is getting good results in doing business differently and more efficiently at the regional level.

We would welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee further in this regard.

(m) how forced amalgamation will affect the specific needs of regional and rural councils and communities, especially in terms of its impact on local economies.

Some commentary in this regard is in the attached submissions to the Reform Agenda

(n) protecting and delivering democratic structures for local government that ensure it remains close to the people it serves.

Some commentary in this regard is in the attached submissions to the Reform Agenda

(o) the impact of the 'Fit for the Future' benchmarks and the subsequent IPART performance criteria on councils' current and future rate increases or levels.

Please see Centroc Submission 25 May 2015 Feedback to IPART on its Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals

(p) any other related matter.

Please contact the Centroc Secretary,

Yours sincerely

Cr Bill West

Chair

Central NSW Councils

Attachment 1 - Centroc Submission 17 October 2014 Centroc EOI to be a pilot JO

Attachment 2 - Centroc Submission 25 May 2015 Feedback to IPART on its Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals

Attachment 3 - Correspondence to Lachlan Shire Council 5 June 2015 Support a future Centroc JO could provide as part of the Lachlan Shire Council Fit for Future application

Attachment 4 - 2013/2014 Centroc Annual Report

Attachment 5 - Recent JO Pilot Update 17 May 2015

Attachment 6 - Local Government Performance Measurement Framework 23 January 2014

Attachment 7 - Response to Government regarding the Independent Local Government Review Panel and Local Government Act Review Taskforce Reports 3 April 2014

Attachment 8 - Response to the Independent Panel document regarding community boards: Community-Level Governance 15 August 2013

Attachment 9 - Future Directions for NSW Local Government Twenty Essential Steps 27 June 2013

Attachment 10 - Discussion Paper A New Local Government Act for NSW 27 June 2013

Attachment 11 - Local Government Reform 21 March 2013

Attachment 12 - Strengthening Your Community – Independent Local Government Review Panel Consultation Paper 4 September 2012

Attachment 13 - Centroc submission to the draft Revenue Framework for Local Government Report 17 September 2009