

**Submission
No 45**

**INQUIRY INTO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
IN CENTRAL WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES**

Organisation: Bathurst Regional Council

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24 August 2011

The Director
Standing Committee on State Development
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into Economic and Social Development in Central Western New South Wales

Thank you for the opportunity to provide advice regarding the factors restricting economic and social development in central western New South Wales.

The Bathurst Region is located in the Central NSW region and covers an area of 3,821.9km². Only 2.5 hours from Sydney, the Region is the gateway to Central NSW and is positioned at the junction of three major transport corridors, being the Mitchell, Great Western and Mid Western Highways.

The Bathurst Region is the largest Local Government Area in the Central West and represents over one-fifth (20%) of the total Central NSW economy. Most of Bathurst's key socioeconomic indicators have experienced positive growth over the past 12 months including population and employment. Bathurst recorded significant population growth in 2009 (2.2%), reflecting the increased inflow of people from other regional centres and metropolitan areas. This shift can be attributed to a growing preference for living in regional centres.

As such Bathurst Regional Council is being placed under considerable pressure to maintain and grow its infrastructure base. Added to this are pressures to facilitate the provision of adequate community services and the provision of cultural and recreational facilities.

1. The provision of health, education and cultural facilities

Health

Bathurst Regional Council believes that it is not the role of Local Government to provide health services yet increasingly, like other Councils in the Region, it is having to play a significant role in the provision of both health and aged care infrastructure and services. Council as a member of Central NSW of Councils (CENTROC) supports Centroc's position on health, in particular the attraction and retention of the health workforce and seeking support for improved health services and infrastructure for the region.

Bathurst Regional Council has identified a number of opportunities that exist for all levels of Government to work together to ensure the provision of adequate health services and infrastructure. These include:

- Provision of appropriate health and aged infrastructure;
- Charles Sturt Medical School – Orange;
- 24 hour helicopter retrieval service;
- Encourage additional partnerships with the education sector to facilitate medical research internships and other training programs;
- Building resilience in small communities through a strategic approach to aged care facilities, hospital and specialist medical services;
- Reduce costs of locums by reviewing relationships with Visiting Medical Officers;
- A review of health workforce resource management by WAHN to enable flexible work arrangements to facilitate recruitment;
- A co-ordinated university placement program with direct support to "growing our own"; and
- State/Local government partnership in supporting the "Beyond the Range" project in attracting Health Workforce.

An ageing and growing population

Residents of NSW are living longer and healthier lives than ever before. "Over the past 20 years, the chances of dying before we reach the age of 70 have dropped by 25%" (GWAHD: 2010). An implication of this demographic shift will be changing service requirements - particularly in the areas of health, aged care and housing.

Forecasting shows that Bathurst will have an increase of 8,309 (19%) residents in the age of 60 years and over by 2016. The 2010 Bathurst Regional Council Social and Community Plan 2011-2016 identifies that current aged care facilities and services are adequate, however, recognises the need to respond and change with the needs of the ageing population. Council, through the provision of land availability and strategic planning, fosters and supports development focused at the provision of aged care.

In terms of health care services and provision, the Greater Western Health Service Plan Towards 2010 (2007) identifies that the ageing population is increasing the need for services and in particular for those services that assist people with complex or chronic conditions.

It is important that key government and non-government professional bodies work towards finding a long term solution and management processes that will enable the facilities and services that will be required by an ageing population to be provided.

2. The reasons for population decline or growth in different areas

Bathurst is, one of the fastest NSW growing inland regions and is, located two and half hours from the NSW state capital, Sydney. The Bathurst Region is home to over 39,915 (2010) residents and is growing at a rate of 1.5% over the past five years. The

region is experiencing considerable growth. Population forecasts predict the region to grow by 30%, to 51,482, by the year 2031 (Informed Decisions: 2010).

The Bathurst Region is the largest LGA in the Central West and represents over one-fifth (20%) of the total Central West Economy. Most of Bathurst's key socioeconomic indicators have experienced positive growth over the past 12 months including population and employment. Bathurst recorded significant population growth in 2009 (2.2%), reflecting the increased inflow of people from other regional centres and metropolitan areas. This shift can be attributed to a growing preference for living in regional centres.

While the Bathurst Regions economic output is largely driven by the manufacturing sector, the key industry employers include education and training, health care and social assistance, agriculture and retail trade sectors - jointly accounting for more than one third of the Local Government Areas (LGA) total employment. Furthermore the LGA has a strong business presence with the property and business services and construction sectors.

Key points to note for the regional economy are:

- From 2008 - 2009, the population of Bathurst has grown at a faster rate than the New South Wales average and is projected to increase by a further 7,800 persons over the period to 2021.
- In 2006, the average age for Bathurst was 36.1 years, one year lower than the average for New South Wales.
- Bathurst is a key industry Centre in the Central NSW region, generating a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of approximately \$1.4 billion and accounting for more than 20% of the Central NSW regions gross regional product in 2008/2009.
- The economy of Bathurst has an even distribution across four main industry sectors of retail, education, health and manufacturing.
- The sheep, cattle (beef) and grain farming sectors have historically been the backbone of the local economy. This sector is supported by the agriculture services sector, export infrastructure and an established supply chain.
- The SuperCheap Auto Bathurst 1000 provides significant Tourism expenditure to the region – it is estimated to produce a turnover of \$53.5 million in the local economy and generate approximately \$23 million in GRP. Each year the Mountain attracts over 183,000 visitors.
- With four major events being held annually and localized events, it is estimated Mount Panorama injects over \$168 million into the Bathurst economy and \$75 million into the NSW gross state product.
- Bathurst has an above average proportion of households purchasing homes or renting, reflecting the relative affordability of the area to the younger age demographic of the region.
- Bathurst has lower average property prices than the New South Wales average, again highlighting the relative affordability of the region.
- In line with median property price trends, Bathurst records lower average home loan repayments than the State, however over the past five years it has experienced a higher than average level of growth.

- Bathurst has had a steady increase in the value of new residential building approvals, with Council approving over \$43 million in new residential development in 2009/2010.
- Bathurst has access to an integrated transport network which supports population growth, industry activity and accessibility to the region and provides multimodal connectivity between Regions and States.
- The area has extensive utility infrastructure, including energy, natural gas, water and waste services, with the capacity to support ongoing population and industry growth. A key threat to infrastructure provision is the possible threat of the loss of water and sewer services from Council.

Evocities

Bathurst Regional Council is proud to support Evocities, a campaign backed by market research to challenge Sydney sides perceptions regarding regional cities. Council commends the Federal and State Government for its continued support for this project which is achieving extraordinary results since its launch in September 2010.

Bathurst has had over 50 people relocate to Bathurst as a direct result of the campaign and a further 5 families indicate they are intending to relocate. This in itself is a testament to the strength of the collaboration in what the campaign it has achieved with the support of both State and Federal Governments.

Restrictions

Despite this growth there are several factors restricting a higher growth rate and these include:

- Meeting the demand for public and private housing (owner-occupiers and rentals)
- Water supply security across business, farming, mining and urban sectors – this cannot be underestimated and the work Centroc has undertaken around water security in the region needs to be progressed
- NBN
- Youth opportunities for education, skills development, employment and social development
- Skill shortages and retention of skilled people
- Lack of public transport services (intra and inter city).
- Declining health services in smaller centres
- Energy supply stability and high cost
- High demand for aged care services
- Climate change
- Recovery from drought
- Shortage of rental housing supply of appropriate standards
- Road and rail access to Sydney

3. The adequacy of transport and road infrastructure

The Bathurst Region is placed at the junction of three major corridor routes, the Great Western, the Mitchell and Mid Western Highways. Bathurst Regional Council supports Centroc's position for transport and road infrastructure including the need for a safe swift Road Link to Sydney through the Bells Line of Road, improvements to rail infrastructure, accessible public transport, the provision of adequate air infrastructure and associated maintenance upgrades.

Bells Line of Expressway

Bathurst Regional Council is a staunch supporter of the Bells Line Expressway. It is a visionary project underpinned by extensive research. It is significantly important for Sydney, as a global city, to be connected with its hinterland so that a safe, swift route with lower carbon emissions can be effected. Further, the Bells Line will minimise impacts to the Blue Mountains communities along the Great Western Highway.

Over thirty (30) investigative documents have been prepared relating to The Bells Line Expressway, since 2000. These documents support and reinforce the need for the Bells Line of Expressway to be completed as a matter of urgency due to a number of key factors including the following: -

- The Western Research Institute concluded that "In five years from completion of the expressway, total economic growth induced by the expressway in the region is expected to be \$268 million (4.5%) in GRP, \$122 million (3.7%) in household income and 3,062 (3.9%) full time equivalent jobs".
- The Great Western Highway and Bells Line of Road are "High Risk" roads. Centroc supports any improvements to the Sydney-Dubbo transport corridor that reduce the risk to road users. NRMA crash statistics suggest that the Bells Line of Road and the Great Western Highway are the two most dangerous roads in NSW.
- The Federal Government, in its Auslink Sydney-Dubbo Draft Corridor Strategy, predicts a decline in the share of rail freight as it migrates to road. Neither the Great Western Highway nor the Bells Line of Road can accommodate efficient freight vehicles such as B-Doubles and the rail system is accurately described as 19th century. Increasing the truck proportion on already high risk roads will increase the risk to motorists. Ecological sustainability requires efficiency, which can not be achieved on the current routes.

Bathurst Regional Council also contends that the topography of the Blue Mountains is special and so ensures that the Great Western Highway will always need to be a local road. Therefore there will always be congestion issues that impact industry particularly the tourism industry, the third largest industry in Central NSW -and growing.

In essence the Bells Line of Expressway provides a natural synergy with the priorities of the State Plan, including but not limited to:

- Increased business investment
- Private business investment growth

- Tourist bed nights
- Maintain and invest in infrastructure
- Increased business investment in rural and regional NSW

Bathurst Regional Council and the members of Centroc and the Bells Line of Expressway Committee are encouraging State and Federal representatives to commit to the next steps in securing the corridor, that is:

- The establishment of route options
- Selection of a preferred route
- Reservation of a preserved route option on LEPs
- Environmental assessment and concept design
- The provision of advice on time frames where the establishment of route options should occur immediately after the completion of the Long Term Strategic Corridor Plan.

Funding for Road Infrastructure

Bathurst Regional Council's road assets are currently in a reasonable condition but, as is the case in much of New South Wales, the infrastructure is aging and deteriorating.

The road asset is also increasing whilst Council's resources to address the network are decreasing. Materials costs of provision and maintenance are rapidly escalating, as are current quality assurance requirements, and increasing legislative requirements such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act which are all adding greatly to Council's costs to maintain current service levels.

Council must prioritise its spending on its current assets and services on a continual basis. If it does not increase funding on the road asset then it must accept that the condition and therefore level of service will decline. In time this will result in accelerated rates of deterioration and increased cost of maintaining to an even lower standard. The annual resident's survey has placed roads as a high priority and to accept that this asset could be allowed to deteriorate is not believed to be an appropriate response.

Bathurst Regional Council needs greater external Government assistance to allocate the appropriate budgets for road pavements to arrest future deterioration. Council is cognisant of the fact that there will be acceleration in the need for funding as the large area of pavements reconstructed in the 1960's and 1970's gradually come on line for major maintenance and reconstruction.

Council values the provision of Federal Government funding under the roads to recovery program and other financial assistant grants. However, the reality is that when combined with other funds available to Council, the level of external funding assistance to maintain current levels of service are not sufficient and this funding gap will continue to increase over time as road costs further increase.

Centroc notes, "If councils were to attempt to increase rate revenue to fund the gap in funding for ROADS alone, rates would need to rise in the order of 25-30% averaged across all Councils. Obviously this is not affordable for our local communities and hence there needs to be a significant increase in funding from other funding sources,

i.e. block grant and repair funding for regional roads, and roads to recovery for local roads.”

In addition councils are further constrained by State Government rate pegging which has reduced available funding in real terms over the last 10 years with increases limited to 2.6 - 3.0% while construction indices suggest costs have been increasing 2 – 8 %.

Public Transport

The Centroc commissioned “Central West Transport Needs Study” (2009) and the review into Country Link services in the region. These studies have identified a number of improvements to public transport. In the first instance improvements need to be implemented.

Bathurst residents and the business community seek to be able to access Sydney and return in a day by public transport where possible. It seems remarkable that Bathurst has such a poor train service from Sydney where communities of a similar distance from Melbourne have four train services a day.

The Report from Penny Sharpe MLC October 2010 on Country LinkUp made 62 recommendations regarding improvements to existing services across the State of NSW regarding passenger services. The Terms of Reference for this report were:

- Service frequency
- Service connectivity
- On-board facilities and
- Ticketing systems

Many of the Bathurst residents rely on bus linkages and more could be done to link back into the electric rail network. The extension of electric rail into Bathurst is a necessity and is supported as a requirement in the CountryLinkUp Report.

4. Ways to encourage development of local enterprise and the potential of region overall

National Broadband Network

Bathurst Regional Council has identified broadband infrastructure as a priority for the region with only 59% of Bathurst private homes being connected to the internet in 2006 (ABS: 2006). Economic and social prosperity in regional areas such as Bathurst is increasingly tied to, and determined by, ICT developments. More and more essential services and businesses are finding their way onto the Internet. Consequently the economy is increasingly becoming a digital economy.

In Australia, although the digital economy has been slow to take off and is still relatively underdeveloped, it is now in sharp ascendancy. Bathurst’s capacity to seize opportunities and meet the challenges in a wide range of areas will depend on the ability to develop and nurture a booming digital economy and essentially harnessing the infrastructure of the NBN.

Establishing longer term markers of success is difficult given the fast pace of change in ICT and other unknown variables. However, benchmarking along the way using key universal indicators is important to be able to measure success and adapt to changing circumstances.

For Bathurst to be a part of the increasing digital economy, the Region must have world class ICT infrastructure. Broadband that is ubiquitous and fast is essential to the Bathurst Region.

5. The comparative level of government business activity located within the region

Bathurst Regional Council supports and welcomes the decentralisation of Government Departments to the Bathurst Region. Bathurst is now home to the Land and Property Management Authority, Department of Fair Trading and more recently the Office of Public Affairs.

Bathurst offers a viable solution to decentralisation of Government Services from the Sydney basin. The Region offers the following key benefits:

- Proximity to Sydney
- Commercial space and land availability
- Lower cost of commercial rents
- Higher labour availability
- Decreased traffic congestion
- Increased quality of Life
- Housing affordability
- Skilled workforce

6. Methodologies for local government to collectively co-operate to achieve increased infrastructure funding for economic growth

Bathurst Regional Council plays an important and expanding role in delivering a broad range of important services at the local level. However, it is also under growing financial pressures that hinder its ability to provide for the increasingly complex needs of 21st century communities. Council therefore works collaboratively on a range of projects with key member organisations such as Centroc and other regional councils to maximise efficiencies and economies of scale.

Centroc's role is to foster the prosperity and sustainable growth of Central New South Wales. This is achieved by advocating on agreed positions and priorities for the region and by facilitating cooperation and the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources. There are a number of key projects which Centroc is advocating on behalf of the Region and which Bathurst Regional Council is proud to support. These include but are not limited to:

- Centroc Water Utilities Alliance is developing collaborative programing in procurement, training, mentoring and best practice which will save councils collectively over a million dollars on the strategic work alone;
- Regional infrastructure priority plan (this project is self-funded and resourced by members). Regional Economic Development Strategy, a partnership effort between DTRITIS, Central West RDA and Centroc. Both these plans will identify areas where local government working collaboratively will add value to the region both economically and in terms of infrastructure development;
- Centroc Regional Training Division service acts as a training broker for member and associate member councils and supports the engagement and development of the training industry in the central NSW region;
- Supply Management offers three significant benefits to the region including aggregated purchasing cost savings, a regional forum for new products and services to be analysed and information sharing among members to develop best practices;
- OHS Risk Management Team facilitates the continual improvement of OHS Management for member councils;
- Central West Human Resources Managers Group is a network of HR professionals that share resources and focus on addressing common issues such as industrial relations, training and skill shortages and strive to deliver the best HR practices and services for their employees; and
- Film Central provides a fast and efficient service to filmmakers planning productions in the region, and provides a framework that maximises the economic and other community benefits that occur from film productions.

Centroc has identified a number of opportunities in which Governments can support councils working collaboratively:

- Review legislation to support regional collaboration between councils for example in procurement;
- Resource councils working collaboratively;
- State led standardisation of asset and other information to facilitate shared Council activities;
- Funding both strategic work and infrastructure programing identified in strategic work for councils operating collaboratively;
- Using Centroc as a model for local government shared services elsewhere in NSW for example the Centroc Water Utilities Alliance;
- Develop a regional plan for Central NSW where Local Council, take a steering or leadership role;
- Fund all State mandates – that is remove cost shifting; and
- Building on and investing in the collaborative advice provided by the Regional Economic Development Strategy and other plans developed in Central NSW.

Council Alliances

Bathurst Regional Council recognises the importance and benefits of working with other Local Government Areas as a way of sharing knowledge, resources and skills. Cited below are just two examples – the Environmental Sustainability Alliance and

Evocities, which demonstrate the benefits of collaboration whilst maintaining each council identity and outcomes for their respective communities.

Environmental Sustainability Alliance (Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo Councils)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the Bathurst Regional, Orange City and Dubbo City Alliance of Councils in May 2006 to further develop cooperative programs, share resources and improve services to foster sustainability. The signing of this MoU recognised rising community concerns with environmental issues and the potential impacts of climate change.

As a result the councils have gone beyond the environmental protection requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) to reflect their growing sense of responsibility for, and stewardship of, the environment through their day-to-day practices and strategic planning.

This Environmental Sustainability Action Plan (the Plan) sets out a direction for Bathurst, Orange and Dubbo councils, as three major regional councils in the Central West of New South Wales (NSW). By working together, greater changes can be implemented with limited resources, and better sustainability outcomes will be achieved.

This Plan, along with others across the State, has been funded by the NSW Environment Trust under the Urban Sustainability Program, a subprogram of the City and Country Environment Restoration Program. By supporting local government in a move towards sustainability planning and practices, a state-wide improvement in environmental management and community involvement will occur.

As a result of the Plan an audit of the existing policies and plans of each council has been undertaken. This helped to identify the existing works and activities of the councils across a range of service areas, as well as gaps where more work is required. The initial audit also identified six priority focus areas for initial environmental action: water, biodiversity, waste, energy, salinity, and pollution. A Management Action Plan for each focus area sets out key challenges and opportunities as well as guiding principles and actions. Climate change and community education are seen as integral issues to be addressed within the action plans. As a result of this collaboration the councils have been successful in obtaining \$2 million funding to commence projects across the local government areas.

Evocities

In 2006 the cities of Albury, Armidale, Bathurst, Dubbo, Tamworth, Orange and Wagga Wagga pooled their resources and commissioned ASCET to conduct research in Sydney as the 1st stage toward the development of a major marketing campaign aimed at persuading Sydney residents to live, work or invest in one of their cities. Almost 12 months from launch, there has been a remarkable 96,000+ visits to the Evocities website. The public relations and marketing campaigns have reached more than fourteen million people and secured media coverage valued at more than \$5 million.

Most importantly, more than 1,600 genuine enquiries (re-locators, businesses and investors) have been received to the seven Evocity locations with more than 200 relocations already attributed directly to the campaign. This in itself is significant as the pre-campaign research indicated the re-location process can be anything up to 24 months.

The majority of Evocities funding for the first year was provided by the Australian Government in the amount of \$1.2 million. Supporting this funding, Evocity council contributions of \$280,000, corporate sponsorship of \$210,000 and State Government funding of \$120,000, provided the funding for a re-location campaign now widely considered to be the most successful ever undertaken in Australia.

An additional \$500,000 has been allocated to the first six months of the second year of the campaign. Provided by the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government - Simon Crean, it clearly demonstrates the Federal Government's belief in, and support of, the Evocities campaign. In line with this, the Evocities themselves have increased their collective annual contribution to \$420,000.

Overall, the seven Evocities remain deeply committed to the Evocities campaign and the benefits it will bring to regional NSW. To ensure its continued success and to drive ongoing enquiries, re-locations and investment, Evocities must, however, continue to secure adequate funding into years two and three of the campaign.

7. Any other factors restricting economic and social development in central NSW

Carbon constrained future

It is noted that Climate Change will create both challenges and opportunities for Bathurst Regional industries in the coming years. In summary, it is predicted that by 2050, rainfall for the Bathurst region will decrease overall.

Overall temperatures are projected to increase by between 1 to 3 degrees Celsius. This will affect patterns of land use as well as production and profitability in agriculture and related sectors. It will also heighten the demand that the balance between social, economic and environmental factors be addressed. Opportunities exist, therefore to innovate through all industry sectors. AEC (2010) notes that there will be interest and investment in the creation of commercially proven technologies that utilise lower emission generation.

Additionally the modifications required for the business community to implement policy changes with regards to climate change, particularly from the perspective of regulation, compliance and corporate strategies, may see a heightened demand for specialised professional services and techniques.

Financial Sustainability

Expenditure per person varies considerably across councils. Regional councils such as Bathurst have higher expenditure per person, on average, compared with urban councils. This is largely explained by the inability to capture economies of scale, having to pay higher input costs, maintaining more kilometres of roads per person and undertaking a relatively more extensive service mix.

State government setting and/or capping fees and charges applies to some services which councils are not required by legislation to provide. However where these services are provided (for example, because of community pressure), the impacts on councils are no different from the provision of mandated services at fees that do not cover costs. According to the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of NSW Local Government (Percy Allan Report 2005), Local Government total income is less than 5% of total tax and other revenue accrued by all levels of government.

At the same time councils experience cost shifting (refer to the LGSA reports). Concurrently rate rises are typically low, for example the rate rise for 2011/2012 has been recently determined by IPART at 2.8%. This is well below the increases in the cost of provision for infrastructure and the added costs of services/facilities shifted to local government.

Bathurst Regional Council urges the Government to support Local Government in finding ways to fund the current and growing infrastructure gap.

Planning

Bathurst Regional Council covers a rural and expanding residential area. Settlement is based in the township of Bathurst, and numerous small villages. The Council encompasses a total land area of over 3,800 square kilometres. Rural land is used primarily for timber production and agriculture, particularly sheep and cattle grazing, with some orcharding, crop farming and market gardening.

Bathurst's challenge is strategically managing the planning requirements to preserve and protect the Regions agricultural land whilst managing the demands of a growing City. Like many other regional councils there are several restrictions and issues in relation to planning which hinder Councils strategic planning process. These include the lack of a regional strategy, the removal of planning powers from local government (eg State Government Planning Policies and other legislative requirements) and the lack of flexibility of the Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006.

Food Security

The Central West region, and specifically the Bathurst Regional Council area, has strong potential to develop the social and economic capital required to transform itself into a food secure region. Establishing this region as Australia's first food secure regional hub would have lasting economic and social benefits, including the promotion of tourism and recreation destination profiles.

Food security is a complex and far reaching issue, particularly in the face of increasing uncertainty regarding international commodity markets, global economic instability, variable climatic conditions, decreasing water availability, and increasing population pressures. Achieving secure food sources directly concerns:

- agricultural production;
- natural resources;
- transport infrastructure;
- diet and nutrition;
- education and awareness; and ultimately
- health outcomes for communities.

The Bathurst region is generously endowed with natural resources that support significant agricultural production. Reducing transport and associated costs by developing local markets would benefit both the producers by reducing their cost structure, as well as consumers who would receive fresher, healthier food. Less wastage through spoilage, reduced costs of refrigeration/storage and less 'food miles' are also benefits for adapting to, and mitigating against climate variability, improving health outcomes, and increasing economic efficiency of our food supply chain.

In addition to the natural resource base, Bathurst has a strong community network of concerned and active community groups in relation to food security and production (approximately eight recognised community groups that are working with Council at various levels). These groups and the Bathurst community at large provide a rich social fabric from which to draw the support and action required to develop Bathurst as Australia's first recognised self-sufficient and food secure region.

In order to progress this concept, the Bathurst region requires support for coordinating community engagement, as well as scoping the market research and actuary data required to make Bathurst a food secure region by establishing successful local markets in conjunction with existing food distribution processes. This will make Bathurst increasingly protected from the follies and impacts of international markets, and at times the negative consequences (externalities) of distorted markets, such as by the presence of strong duopolies, heavy protection, price subsidies etc.

Council views the NSW Government inquiry as a prime opportunity to develop a pilot program in the Bathurst region to develop itself as a proud food secure region, which also contributes to the region's tourism profile and attractiveness as a destination for visitors and new residents alike (for example, western Sydney vegetable growers could re-locate to this region on favourable economic terms relative to Sydney urban land values)

Summary

This document identifies a number of issues in relation to the impediments to growth in the Central NSW Region in terms of social and economic development. Bathurst Regional Council prides itself on working collaboratively to ensure the cost

effectiveness and positive outcomes for the residents and industry within the Region. These issues can be summarised as follows:

- Growing Region
- Funding Gap in relation to rising infrastructure costs, cost shifting and rate pegging
- National Broadband Network
- Bells Line of Road
- Evocities
- Lack of public transport (Intra and intercity)
- Effects of Climate Change
- Skills Shortages
- Water supply security
- Food security
- Resourcing Councils working collaboratively
- Carbon constrained future
- Planning restrictions

Yours faithfully

D J Shērley
GENERAL MANAGER