

16 March 2011

Michael Deegan
National Infrastructure Co-ordinator
Infrastructure Australia
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601



Dear Mr Deegan,

RE: RESPONSE TO THE REGIONAL TOWNS WATER QUALITY AND SECURITY REVIEW

Tumut Shire Council has considered the recent AECOM Report of 25 October 2011 and would like to provide the following comments.

Tumut Shire Council is a General Purpose Council and manages water supply and sewerage systems for five towns and villages. All of these communities are provided with filtered water supplies and reticulated sewerage systems and the delivery of these services meets with current Best Practice Guidelines, the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and DECC-W licence conditions. Council delivers these services within the state median water and sewerage bills.

We deliver a high standard of customer service, from within a single shopfront whilst providing all other Council services.

We have sound strategic and financial plans in place and have carried out substantial works to secure town water supplies for all urban communities within this shire.

Council's response to the *Key Recommendations* is as follows:

1. Mandatory compliance with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) is supported; Council consistently complies with these guidelines.
2. The NSW Health Department has a health based regulatory role associated with drinking water quality. Refinement of this role to conform to a national standard is supported by Council.
3. The NSW Office of Water is responsible for independent monitoring and reporting of water quality performance of regional NSW water utilities. IPART also has a regulatory role. Refinement of their roles to conform to a national standard is supported.
4. NSW regional water utilities operate under a Best Practice Management Framework including Best Practice Pricing Policy. A national standard that builds on this framework is supported. Council complies with the DEUS - *Best Practice Management of water and Sewerage Guidelines*.

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5. NSW, through the Office of Water (NOW), has in place well developed operator training courses. A national standard that builds on this model is supported. Council Operators are trained and accredited by NOW. Council employs in house experienced engineering staff and has an ongoing Engineering Cadet/Trainee program in place.
6. Council does not support the structural reform of water utilities in NSW. There are significant financial, social and environmental costs in disaggregating water supply functions from local government in NSW and forming regional corporations that have not been taken into account.

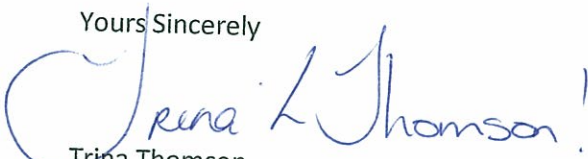
We believe that the impact from the loss of provision water and sewerage by Tumut Shire Council would be very significant and would include the following:

- A reduction in customer service levels
- Potential large increase in annual bills including increases to provide dividends payable to Regional/Government Authorities
- Substantial setup costs that would be charged back to customers
- Direct loss of jobs in administration and middle management as these jobs are multi-functional across many general purpose activities, also resulting in loss of wealth from within the shire
- Loss of community assets to a regional authority
- Loss of local representation and accessibility to staff
- Potential threat to the sustainability of the shire

We request that you give further serious consideration to any Water Reform proposal for NSW.

Should you require any further information I may be contacted on (02) 69412502, or (02) 69471834.

Yours Sincerely



Trina Thomson
MAYOR