

Media Release



Country Mayors Association Inc of NEW SOUTH WALES

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DON'T TOUCH OUR WATER

The NSW Parliament is currently debating change that will enshrine Sydney Water and Hunter Water in the NSW Constitution to ensure they stay publicly owned; however there is no mention of local government in the proposed amendment.

Country Mayors Association of NSW (CMA), on behalf of its members, is calling for an expansion of the scope of the Bill to include all local government-owned assets to stay in the hands of Local Government to ensure Local Government will never lose control of its most important asset - our water.

“Over many years across Australia, state governments have increasingly been taking control of water and sewer utilities from Local Government, causing a significant increase in cost to residents, as well as loss of local autonomy in decision making that guarantees future growth direction CMA Chairman, Mayor Chaffey said”

“Regional Councils also rely heavily on our utilities for our future viability. That has never been more critical than now. Financial viability was identified as our members’ most important issue in our recent member survey”.

Mayor Chaffey said “CMA held our quarterly general meeting in Sydney at Parliament House last Friday with more than 85% of our membership in attendance. Minister for Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health, Youth and the North Coast, The Hon Rose Jackson was a guest speaker. Ms Jackson spoke of the proposed Constitutional change and stated: “Both Sydney Water and Hunter Water are statutory state-owned corporations and can be safeguarded against privatisation by an amendment to the Constitution Act.”

CMA members accepted the opportunity to ask the Minister questions relating to her new Ministries. Mayor of the Forbes Shire Council Cr Phyllis Miller said: “In response to my question about Local Government retaining ownership of Local Water Utilities in regional NSW that I asked at the meeting of Country Mayors, the Minister for Water, Rose Jackson’s response was that it would be the case and I understood this to mean that she supported this being enshrined in the constitution.”

Deputy Chairman of CMA Mayor Rick Firman stated: “Our CMA members have spoken loudly and clearly, especially through our recent survey results. It is critical that water remains in the hands of our communities, through local government. We strongly and respectfully call on our new State Government to please include the protection of our water in the NSW Constitution. Water gives us life – it really is critical that our members are listened to.”

“CMA has long held the position that our water and sewer utilities must remain in the hands of Local Government, not State Government or any other entity or be privatised. Do not touch our water. Add Local Government to the Constitution change”, Mayor Chaffey said

“The CMA stands firm in our pursuit of equity of service provision for the residents of our communities,” Chairman Chaffey said. “We stand united with our members to advocate for residents who choose to call country NSW home. We will continue to work with both State and Commonwealth governments to achieve the best quality of life and provision of services for our residents, and we look forward to a prosperous future,” Mayor Chaffey said.

For further information, contact

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