



PRESS RELEASE

COUNCILS CALL FOR ACTION ON WATER SECURITY ALONG THE BARWON DARLING RIVER SYSTEM

The Mayors of Walgett, Brewarrina and Bourke Shire Councils and Administrator of Central Darling Shire Council have renewed calls for action on improving the water security for communities along the Barwon Darling River System.

At a Meeting held in Sydney last week, following the Annual Conference of Local Government New South Wales the Mayors and other Council representatives present agreed that drought conditions and water shortages being experienced by communities along the Barwon Darling River System should not be repeated and action should be taken now to as far as possible, mitigate the chances of any recurrence.

The meeting was also attended by Officers from Public Works Advisory, Department of Water as well as the New South Wales Town Water Security Coordinator, James McTavish.

The Mayors agreed that the current conditions are causing significant financial, emotional and social stress for all those living along the Barwon Darling River System.

The Mayors agreed that a solution will require a bi partisan and cooperative approach at all levels of Government and pledged to work alongside the other tiers of Government to determine a solution.

The meeting sought to raise the following items:-

- a. The need to finalise the preparation of Western Weirs Plan clearly articulate the proposal to all communities along the river system.
- b. Utilising the proposed weir strategy and existing storages ensure that each community reliant on the river system as their primary water source has access to minimum two (2) year's supply of water with such water held in storages quarantined accordingly for that purpose.
- c. That any new weirs that are constructed are designed to allow for the periodic flushing of the storages as the opportunity arises.
- d. That provision is also made for the construction of bores that can supplement the proposed increase in storage capacity and further enhance town water security.
- e. That recognition be given to the importance of the social and recreational benefit to be derived from a permanent water supply, including the cultural benefits derived by the Aboriginal community.

General Manager of Bourke Shire Council, Ross Earl said that following the meeting he had been in contact with Minister Pavey's Office and had made arrangements for the Councils to be briefed on the Western Weir's Strategy over the next few weeks.

The Mayors as a collective, indicated that they were extremely appreciative of the support being provided to impacted communities by the Minister for Water, the Hon Melinda Pavey, MP but see the implementation of longer term strategy being by far the preferred and best longer term option.

The Council representatives were extremely strong on the need for Local Government to be part of the solution and the need for a cooperative and collaborative approach to be adopted if a solution is able to be determined and adopted.

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END

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