

24 October 2019

IPART – Local Government Burdens Report
Locked Bag 3015
NOWRA NSW 2541
Via email: lgregburdens@olg.nsw.gov.au

To Whom It May Concern,

Response to Reporting and Compliance Burdens upon Local Government – IPART Final Report

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Reporting and Compliance Burdens upon Local Government – IPART Final Report on behalf of the Orana Water Utilities Alliance (OWUA).

The OWUA is made up of 11 member Councils (LWUs) from across Western NSW. This includes Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Gilgandra, Narromine, Walgett, Warren and Warrumbungle Shire Councils along with Mid-Western Regional Council. Members of the OWUA are committed to providing a unified approach to the sustainable delivery of water supply and sewerage services, and to achieve and maintain gazetted best practice across some of the smallest and most remote communities in NSW. OWUA allows members to participate in a collaborative approach to pool resources, reduce duplication and form a common platform to develop initiatives and deliver projects.

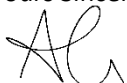
OWUA supports IPART recommendation 11 which would enable LWU's to work more effectively to deliver outcomes for their communities. DPIE Water needs to acknowledge the local knowledge and expertise that exists and work collaboratively with LWU's to deliver these outcomes and move away from the current top down approach.

Areas of particular concern for OWUA members are the complex and costly IWCM process and Section 60 approvals which is coupled with DPIE Water's inflexibility and inefficiency. Specific examples include:

- A checklist of 106 data sets which is confusing and word heavy. This feedback was provided to DPIE Water staff at the SSWP Roadshow held in Dubbo on 14 May 2019. In June 2019, an updated checklist was developed, however it has not simplified the process for LWUs.
- Inability for DPIE Water staff to provide examples of IWCM strategies which have been approved since 2014. A number of OWUA member Councils have requested this information as they wish to review approved IWCM strategies to ensure they are on the right track and can be better informed on what the expectations are.
- Limited number of consultants with ability to meet strict criteria means that there are lengthy delays and no guarantee that strategies will be approved by DPIE Water. More work needs to be done with consultants across the industry so they have the confidence and know the expectations in order to develop strategies which will meet the requirements and subsequently, be approved.
- Emergency funding is being granted however Councils are experiencing delays in the Section 60 approval which is holding up projects that would otherwise be progressing if the approval came packaged with the funding. Current conditions mean that these important projects are not being delivered for communities in desperate need of reprieve.

If you wish to clarify any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely



ALAYNA GLEESON

PROJECT OFFICER, ORANA WATER UTILITIES ALLIANCE