

FIT FOR THE FUTURE - IPART HEARS COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY VIEWS

15 May 2015

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) will take account of the views of local councils and their communities in determining how council proposals under the NSW Government's Fit for the Future reforms will be assessed.

Dozens of people attended a forum in Dubbo today following a similar forum in Sydney on Monday to discuss IPART's *Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals Consultation Paper* published late last month. Public forums will be held in Coffs Harbour and Wagga Wagga next week.

IPART Chairman Dr Peter Boxall said the forums provide an invaluable opportunity to hear first hand local views about how the Fit for the Future proposals will be assessed.

"We want the process to be transparent so councils are aware what they need to do and can consult with their communities accordingly," Dr Boxall said.

"The Fit for the Future criteria have already been set by the NSW Government and were announced last year.

"We are not revisiting the criteria – that is outside the scope of this review - but we are interested views about how to best assess whether councils meet those criteria and provide that advice to government."

Dr Boxall said it is up to each council to determine the best way forward to address their specific needs and challenges.

"Councils are able to put forward proposals that do not match the recommendations of the Independent Local Government Review Panel in 2014, but would have to provide a sound argument as to why that's not the best option in their case, except in the case of far west councils that are not required to put forward a proposal for assessment," Dr Boxall said.

Submissions on the Consultation Paper will be received until 25 May 2015. A copy of the Consultation Paper and information about how to make submissions can be found on the IPART website www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

For further information, contact: Julie Sheather 02 9290 8403 or 0409 514 643