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TWEED
SHIRE COUNCIL

6 January 2014

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Dr Peter Boxall AO
Chairman
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box Q290
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Dear Dr Boxall

RE: Review of the Funding Framework for Local Land Services

Council has been given the opportunity to consider the NSW Local Land Services response to the Review of the Funding Framework for Local Land Services, together with a submission in response from NOROC, being the Northern Rivers Regional Organisation of Councils.

Council understands the NSW Government is establishing the new entity, Local Land Services (LLS), to provide services/functions currently delivered by Livestock Health and Pest Authorities, Catchment Management Authorities and parts of the NSW Department of Primary Industries.

The services to be delivered by the LLS include biosecurity, plant and animal pest control, emergency response, advice on production for farm businesses and natural resource management.

Council shares NOROC's concerns and opposition to the following key issues and recommendations outlined in the Local Land Services Board of Chairs' Review of the Funding Framework for Local Land Services:

- **LLS BoC recommends that all risk creators are subject to the LLS rate including land holdings below 2 hectares (excluding commercial and industrial land).**

LLS BoC is proposing Councils utilise their existing processes and databases to collect LLS rates on land below 2 hectares. NOROC is strongly opposed to this. NOROC councils do not believe they should undertake this responsibility on behalf of the LLS. Not only will this generate a significant impost/burden on council resources, but NOROC councils believe ratepayers will not make the distinction between their residential rates and the LLS rates. That is, landowners will assume it is an added financial burden imposed by their local council.

NOROC is also opposed to the LLS BoC proposal that a large proportion of rates collected by councils be expended on an education program for the benefit of the group paying the rate and that this education program/service be negotiated between Councils and LLS. NOROC Councils do not want to collect LLS rates nor do they see a role for them in providing an education program on a NSW Government rate imposed on landowners.

Council is of the view that the proposed recommendation runs counter to the intergovernmental agreement signed in October 2012, which provides that where local government is asked or required by the State or Commonwealth governments to provide a service or function, any consequential financial impact on local government is a key consideration. The utilisation of Council resources for the collection of LLS rates will generate a financial burden on Councils and this cannot be supported.

- **That exemptions for public landholders are removed. That LLS engages in a process with these land managers to determine how they will manage their risk management obligation and contribution to LLS.**

NOROC councils do not support a new LLS rate on public land to be paid by Local Government. Councils are already involved in many natural resource management projects, and allocate resources to authorities such as the Richmond River County Council for the management of weeds.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Review of the Funding Framework for Local Land Services.

Yours faithfully


Troy Green
General Manager