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## Mayor rejects amalgamation of Shoalhaven Water

Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green has totally rejected the idea of the amalgamation and corporatisation of Shoalhaven Water. The changes to the local water utility are suggested in a report released by Infrastructure Australia.

Infrastructure Australia's Regional Towns Water Quality and Security Review Report recommends wholesale amalgamation and corporatisation of non-metropolitan water utilities in NSW, with the transfer of ownership to State Government Water Corporations

Clr Green said this was a ludicrous idea. "Could you imagine the State government running Shoalhaven Water? Not only would our city lose its autonomous water supply and sewerage capabilities, it would mean that the State government could move to take as much water from the Shoalhaven as they saw fit, and Council would lose the ability to gain a good dividend from a highly successful water utility," Clr Green said.

"And besides Shoalhaven Water is one of the best performing water utilities in NSW, according to the latest National Performance review. The suggestion is ill informed and wrong. Shoalhaven Water is already performing at best practice and understands our city's local priorities and delicate environmental concerns."

A National Performance Report 2008-2009 for Urban Water Utilities has found that Shoalhaven Water is one of the best performing utilities in NSW, when it is compared to the other Non Major Water Utilities.

Council believes there are other issues relating to the Regional Towns Water Quality and Security Review Report proposal. These include:

- There was no consultation with local government
- Local councils generally and especially Shoalhaven are substantially meeting the Best Practice Guidelines
- Shoalhaven City Council and Shoalhaven Water are financially sustainable, have good expertise on staff, and our water pricing is certainly on par with the industry
- Keeping water and sewer operations local has positive benefits for local employment. Other service providers such as telecommunications, railways, and postal services have been sold off by government, leading to job losses in the country NSW. Along with a corresponding decline in responsiveness to customers generally and time delay in emergency response.

The National Water Performance Report is designed to outline water consumption trends with up to 155 key indicators relating to the performance of the urban water industry. A copy of the National Performance Report is available on Shoalhaven Water's internet site at <http://shoalwater.nsw.gov.au/News/news.htm#PerformaceReportCard>.

**CONTACT:** Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green

(02) 4429 3251 0423 881 873