Advocating for the people of Western Sydney

October 28, 2014

WSROC hits back at Greens claim of ''corruption"

Western Sydney councils have slammed comments by the NSW Greens that allowing their Regional Organisations to undertake contracts and tenders could potentially lead to corruption.

''Exactly what are they saying here?" asked WSROC president Cllr Tony Hadchiti. ''Are they implying that our ROCs - which are themselves owned and run by delegated councillors from our member councils - are open to corrupt practices?''

"This simply displays an extraordinary ignorance, even for the Greens, of how a Regional Organisation of Councils functions and what the intention of the legislation is.

"The reforms proposed in the Local Government (Red Tape Reduction) Act are designed to make it easier for councils to enter into joint contracts. All tender processes and contract negotiations will be directed and endorsed by elected councillors who are delegated by their councils to sit on the Boards of the ROCs.

"The only difference will be that each contract does not have to go back to each individual full council for endorsement, saving time, money and confusion. But those councils will still have ultimate approval through their delegates on the Board.

"And councils will still be free to opt in or out of contracts as it suits them – we are not pushing for a one size fits all or any form of compulsory participation."

"The Greens claim that this legislation will remove accountability and transparency, however procurement managers will still be required to report to their local councils, adhere to established processes and submit to regular auditing processes."

Cllr Hadchiti said the several of the metropolitan ROCs, including WSROC have long and well established histories in joint procurement which has already saved their councils, and ratepayers, millions of dollars.

"The Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils already saves its member councils and their residents almost $3 million through joint purchasing initiatives each year. These savings could be greatly improved by cutting the red tape that prevents councils work together efficiently and achieving greater results for their rate payers," he said.

"These changes would improve the efficiency of group tendering processes, allowing local councils to achieve economies of scale and greater purchasing power."

"This new legislation is in the spirit of the NSW Government's Fit for the Future initiative, and has the sole aim of making it easier for Local Governments to operate in an efficient and collaborative manner," he said.

About WSROC:

Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) represents 10 local councils in Western Sydney. WSROC advocates on behalf of its councils and their residents to ensure equity in infrastructure and services, to promote liveability and quality of life. It seeks to deliver value to councils through regional collaboration in coordinated procurement, IP and shared services, and manages a number of regional projects funded jointly by its members or from external sources.

The Local Government Review Panel did not recommend mergers for many of our Western Sydney member councils due to their size and population. Regional cooperation is a fantastic way for these councils to achieve increased efficiencies where a merger proves unfeasible," he said.

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