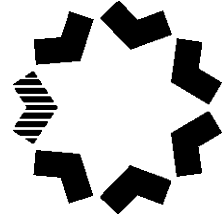


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PRESS RELEASE

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WATER REFORM – BUSINESS DEPENDS ON IT

The President of the National Competition Council, Mr Graeme Samuel, has today written to every Local Government municipality and shire in Australia enclosing Discussion Papers on Water Reform.

The papers outline the reforms agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 1994, and currently being put in place by all three levels of Australian Governments.

Essentially, the water reforms relate to:

- Pricing – (Paying for the water you use)
- Rights / entitlements – (Clarifying allocations for users and the environment)
- Trading – (Buying and selling water allocations)
- Infrastructure – (Justifying new investment on economic & environmental grounds)
- Service provision – (An increased focus on customers)

None of the reforms are simple but they are critically important to the long-term future of most rural industries and the communities that rely on those industries.

Whilst the reforms will ultimately bring significant benefits to rural and regional Australia, many have immediate financial and business implications for rural communities. Therefore, it is essential that the communities have access to information and are encouraged to understand the need for change.

Informed communities are more amenable to change, no matter how difficult. Future generations will thank today's community leaders who put politicking aside and work to ensure the long-term sustainability of our waterways and agriculture.

The National Competition Council hopes the new Discussion Papers will be a useful tool for all levels of Government to help explain water reform to the community.

For further information or comment contact: Anna Schulze (03) 9285 7789
