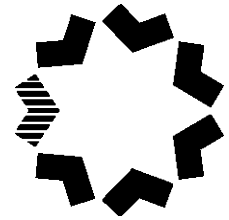


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PRESS RELEASE

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WATER METERS – A DECISION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The President of the National Competition Council (NCC), Mr Graeme Samuel said today that he was concerned about recent statements by local governments that Queenslanders would be forced to install water metres.

This is simply not true.

The national water reforms are about ensuring a sustainable supply of water, for future generations, which makes both economic and environmental sense.

Local governments already own and operate town water supply systems that are then paid for by ratepayers.

The water reforms only require Local Governments to consider and install meters where they prove cost effective. If metering is uneconomic then no one will be forcing communities to install them.

Water meters enable consumption to be measured allowing water bills to better reflect the actual amount of water used. If meters were installed some people might pay less, others might pay more depending on individual use. However metering does give users a strong financial incentive to use water wisely and better control over their water bills.

Water metering has proved cost effective for ratepayers in some areas, including in Queensland. In many cases water meters have reduced total consumption delaying investment in costly new infrastructure and saving local communities hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In 1994 all Australian governments, including Queensland, adopted a package of water reform commitments. These commitments are the same for all States and Territories. They can only be changed by agreement of all State, Territory and Commonwealth governments.

The water reforms are one of the most difficult and overdue reforms that Australia has ever taken. However reform is not only about economics and the environment – is it more fundamental than that. It is about having enough water and enough arable land to support Australia's agriculture in the future.

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