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MEDIA RELEASE

NSROC COUNCILS SEE RED BUT STAY IN THE BLACK

The President of the Northern Sydney Region of Councils (NSROC), Mayor Pat Reilly of Willoughby Council, strongly rejects recent claims by the private company Review Today that a number of the councils in northern Sydney are financially 'unsustainable'.

The claims are made in a report released at the Local Government Association in Coffs Harbour late last month by Review Today, which used an analysis by economic consultancy Fiscal Star to claim that four of the seven NSROC councils are unsustainable.

Mr Reilly stated that while many councils in New South Wales are under significant financial pressure due to on-going rate pegging, the methodology used by the authors of the study was crude and did not accurately reflect the real financial outlook for councils in the NSROC region.

"All of the councils in NSROC have worked diligently to provide services to their community while at the same time ensuring that long term financial strategies are in place to guarantee financial viability" he said.

"The NSROC councils have been particularly proactive in addressing any infrastructure backlogs and have recently completed regional asset management guidelines to ensure that the issue of infrastructure remains a focal point for action."

"While I agree with the broad sentiments of the Review Today study in terms of the financial pressure that councils are under, I find the timing and methodology of the review highly questionable. The simple fact is that doing a desktop study using on-line data and a completely arbitrary set of criteria is not going to accurately reflect what is really happening on the ground."

"We don't need more consultants looking for business by telling us things we already know or by implying councils can't manage their economic fortunes. What we do need is a commitment by the state government to lift rate pegging and a commitment from the federal government to give councils a fairer share of federal taxation revenue" he added.

**Media Inquiries should be directed to:
Dominic Johnson, Executive Director, NSROC
Ph: 9911 3595 Mob: 0419 433 374**

Hornsby - Hunter's Hill - Ku-ring-gai - Lane Cove - North Sydney - Ryde - Willoughby