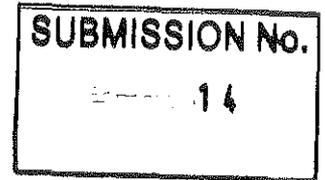




WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

PS0022/JM:SMK

13 August 2008



The Hon John Pandazopoulos
Chair
Environment & Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Sir,

In response to your request for comments from the Council regarding Melbourne's future Water Supply I advise that Council wishes to convey to you the following comments:

- (1) To allow Melbourne to grow at current rates will only result in increased demand for water. Whilst the proposed desalination plant and other recent measures may address them in the short term, there seems no easy answer for the long term. This Council like other rural areas has concerns that future solutions will result in further calls for water across rural Victoria which will have impacts for primary industry and the communities it supports.

The answer should be redirecting population to regional and rural Victoria with a commensurate investment in supporting infrastructure.

- (2) The harvesting of storm and flood water is still far from effective and greater effort should be applied to identify means by which this substantial supply of water can be captured. It need not be dams, but could be through storages located at strategic locations across communities and the water used for industry and recreational use. Council appreciates some efforts have been made in this area, but more needs to be done. If the climate change advocates are right then we will need to effectively harvest every available drop of water.
- (3) This Council has two water re-use projects in place that have proved highly effective in the harvesting of stormwater in one case and the use of treated effluent water in the other. Although on a small scale they would have applications elsewhere and more funding should be directed towards communities willing to undertake such projects.

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All correspondence to: **EDENHOPE CIVIC CENTRE: PO Box 201, Edenhope Vic.3318**

Office locations:

Edenhope: 49 Elizabeth Street, Edenhope, Vic 3318 Tel: 03 5585 9900 – Fax: 03 5585 9950

Kaniva District Office: 25 Baker Street, Kaniva, Vic 3419. Tel: 03 5392 7700 – Fax 03 5392 7750

WEB SITE:www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au

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- (4) The science related to ground water suggests that this is a finite resource and excessive use will amount to mining of it and the consequences of doing so are unknown. The use of ground water should continue to be regulated and recourse only had to additional uses where no other option exists.
- (5) The Council is sympathetic to the position in which Melbourne finds itself and fully understands that continued growth is as inevitable as it is necessary, but it should not be at the expense of rural and regional Victoria.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment and we look forward to seeing the results of your efforts in due course.

Yours faithfully



JAMES MCKAY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER