

Executive Officer
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
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Spring Street, East Melbourne 3002
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SUBMISSION No.
31



Inquiry into Melbourne's Future Water Supply

Foremost, I must convey my absolute and unwavering opposition to the north-south [sugarloaf] pipeline proposal.

This inquiry now being undertaken should have formed the basis for the decision made by the government as to how to address the perceived water shortage faced by the Melbourne region. Perhaps thousands of us today would not be wasting so much time and energy, at great expense on opposition to the most city-centric proposal in decades.

Shortage or wastage?

Until many water savings initiatives are implemented, it is questionable whether there is an actual shortage of water, or rather a case of overuse and misuse. It may be possible to avoid costly measures to secure additional water by merely looking at how and where we use our potable supply of water, and making appropriate changes.

1. Further water savings that can be achieved by increased conservation and efficiency efforts.

Commitment to permanent water savings measures

Our attitude to water usage must change, and this must continue. There is no point in securing more water only to have everyone revert to their old habits once restrictions are lifted or people believe there is more water around. Awareness of our water-use habits is perhaps at an all time high and this must be capitalised upon. This receptive audience must be engaged to make permanent water savings measures a part of their daily lives and routine. There needs to be some major incentive and reinforcement of the continual need to be water wise. We must all continue to value this vital resource and avoid slipping back into an era of high water consumption once this immediate situation improves.

The overuse of water for gardens has to be addressed – gardens have survived with much less water, so we need to reduce the volume and frequency of waterings – rather than watering for the sake of it! Perhaps watering of gardens needs to be restricted on a more permanent basis, which would encourage the installation and utilization of rainwater tanks, and more appropriate watering regimes.

Swimming pools lose large volumes of water to evaporation. Use of pool covers and tank water would be of benefit to reducing demand on need for water replacement.

Industry participation

All industry must develop and adhere to a water savings plan and undertake regular reviews. All accommodation establishments must comply with water savings measures. Many do not have dual-flush toilets or water-saving shower rose. Why not?

Guests must be encouraged to conserve water and respect the level of water restrictions that apply to that area.

Regular maintenance and prompt attention when a problem is reported would save a lot of water wastage, particularly with public toilets. Display of a phone number may result in more problems being reported.

2. The collection of stormwater

Tanks thanks!

Tanks have been under-utilised. Rural areas rely largely on tank storage to meet all requirements. Metro areas need only supplement non-potable needs such as toilets and garden usage, to make a significant reduction in overall water consumption. However, capacity of the tank has to be sufficient for this to be a worthwhile investment.

There is business opportunity to capture and store stormwater specifically for use on local parks and gardens (no doubt to be opposed by water authorities!)

3 the use of treated waste water.

Wherever possible, recycled water should be used in industry and areas where potable water use is not necessary. Events venues, such as sports, racing, theatre etc could utilize recycled or storm water to flush toilets, saving massive volumes of potable water.

6 Any other optional water sources

Dam alternative

The Government is resolutely opposed to building more dams on rivers. As with the N-S pipeline proposal, there is *no need* to dam a river. Water can be extracted from a river and piped to a storage area elsewhere. Many rivers across the south of the divide could be accessed so that no one river or catchment bears the burden of excess demand.



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