



Boroondara Residents' Action Group

Protecting what we love about our neighbourhood

SUBMISSION FROM BOROONDARA RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP (BRAG) ON MELBOURNE'S FUTURE WATER SUPPLY.

Boroondara Residents' Action group has a membership of over 500 residents and was set up to "protect what we love about our neighbourhood". Our Group was also set up to protest against unacceptable and inappropriate development which results from the government's planning blueprint Melbourne 2030.

One of our many concerns is that population growth and development form a major component of the government's economic strategy without sufficient attention to upgrading infrastructure.

There has been an over-reliance by government on exploiting existing infrastructure coupled with an inadequate response to addressing drought and climate change. The government has been slow to respond resulting in short term measures such as the north-south pipeline which relies upon taking water from areas that need that water for agricultural purposes.

According to Stern, IPCC and Garnaut reports, predicted and future trends project on-going temperature increases coupled with declining rainfall for south eastern Australia.

Extraction of some 75G.L of water a year from the Goulburn river system is considered unsustainable and therefore a threat to local food production and supply.

The record lows of around 30% of capacity of dams supplying water to Melbourne, is the result of a 10 year progressive decline in rainfall. Based upon scientific reports of the IPCC and others, this decline is not a drought but a structural shift in rainfall due to climate change. To rely on a break in the drought is therefore not a real expectation.

The State Government's planning strategies need to assume ongoing temperature rises and decreases in rainfall and include climate change within the policies of all government departments and, in particular, the Department of Planning and Community Development.

BRAG supports preparation of a 10-15 year water strategy plan with appropriate budget allocations and based upon modelling correlated with population growth to determine water needs including :-

- Building additional dams for future supply:
- Set procedures and measurable targets for collecting stormwater across the city.
- Investigate diversion to aquifer storage - and recovery
- Mandating greater use of water tanks for domestic use.
- Legislation to ensure commercial interests save & store water for their own use.
- Control of excessive use of water supplied to Commercial interests.
- Control of use of water for rural production of uncommercial and unviable grain crops.
- Allocation of funding for research and improvements to the efficient use of water.
- Banning tree logging in vicinity of water catchments.

BRAG does not support:-

- The proposed desalination plant at Wonthaggi
(We are suspicious of the intent of the public/private partnership and the possibility of a long term government objective to make the operators of the desal plant commercially responsible for overall water supply, for profit. In addition we believe the costs to build infrastructure and produce desalinated water are prohibitive).
- The proposed pipeline from the north-east of Vic.
(As previously stated , this water is needed for agricultural purposes and diversion of 75 GL a year to Melbourne is based upon exaggerated inflow and water savings predictions).
- Unfettered use of water by commercial interests.
- Continued and increasing growth of Melbourne to meet the needs of increasing migration targets set by this current government.

BRAG notes that the Auditor General's report "Planning for Water Infrastructure in Victoria" , April 2008, states that the demands on our increasingly scarce water resources are set to increase as the Government aims to grow the economy to accommodate a further one million people by 2025.

We question the government's policy of encouraging migration to Melbourne in the face of increasing uncertainty about our ability to cope with the increasing demands on existing infrastructure and our decreasing supply of water.


Jack Roach,
President Boroondara Residents' Action Group

BRAG SUPPORTS PLANNING BACKLASH