



**BRIMBANK**  
CITY COUNCIL

File: 08/45531

22 August 2008

The Hon. Mr Pandazopoulos MP  
Chair, Environment & Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament of Victoria  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Minister

### **Inquiry into Melbourne's Future Water Supply**

Thank you for your letter received 21 July 2008 inviting submissions to the abovementioned inquiry that will form the basis of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee's report to the Victorian Parliament.

Sporting fields in Victoria are predominantly sown with cool season grasses. These sporting fields have suffered badly as the result of drought conditions and the necessary limitations imposed by water restrictions, and a large number have consequently become unsafe and unplayable.

For community health and OH&S reasons, and to help ease Melbourne's water problem, it would be reasonable to allow council's exemption during water restrictions for the conversion of sporting fields from cool season to warm season grasses.

Warm season grasses have a number of advantages: they are more durable and drought resistant than cool season grasses and they have a greater tolerance for alternative water supplies such as recycled water, river water and bore water. Once the grounds are fully established, the overall water savings for a standard size oval is around 60 to 75 per cent of that of a cool season grass oval.

Another consequence of not being able to water in the establishment of new grasses is that aging playing surfaces cannot be refurbished or reconstructed, making them increasingly difficult to maintain in a safe state.

There is a degree of frustration with the inability to undertake warm season grass conversion works as a response to the drier weather conditions that Melbourne is experiencing. The current 1 in 4 watering regime, for sporting fields, in metropolitan Melbourne does not provide the ability to undertake these much needed conversions. New water allocation provisions unveiled in early 2008 do not result in any improved ability to undertake warm season grass conversions, despite the implied increased flexibility. This is because the allocation is limited to a Council's water usage of the past 12 months, which provides no spare capacity to accommodate additional initiatives.

Exemption during water restrictions for the conversion of sporting fields from cool season to warm season grasses would achieve long term water savings.

Yours sincerely

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