



29 August 2008



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



Dear Mr Pandazopoulos

### **INQUIRY INTO MELBOURNE'S FUTURE WATER SUPPLY**

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is appreciative of the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry and accordingly provides the following comments for the Committee's consideration.

The current climatic conditions being experienced over much of the continent and the ongoing impacts of this drought cannot be overstated. The impacts being experienced by the Murray-Darling Basin are impacting severely on the social, environmental and economic fabric of the Mallee region.

The Mallee CMA is aware of the degree of community opposition to the North-South Pipeline and would submit that any further extractions destined for Melbourne or other southern areas from north of the divide must be in accordance with standing rules and agreements that underpin the Victorian Cap on water diversions and particularly, must not erode or tamper with existing water trading markets.

The authority applauds any and all efforts being made to drive efficiency gains in the general use of water to support Melbourne's needs. However, just as rural communities need to recognise these efforts, so must urban areas recognise the enormous gains made in water use efficiency by the irrigation sector and the considerable capital investments made by both the public and private sectors to drive the uptake of new technology in water transport and on farm application. Much of these efforts were made prior to this current drought and were driven mainly by environmental and economic considerations. In terms of the Mallee, any further efficiency gains will be very small compared to the magnitude of gains made over the past decade.

The authority would reiterate that the impacts of this current drought are wide spread and affect us all. It should not be forgotten that any new water savings generated from initiatives must take account of a fair and equitable share for the environment and that this should be recognised, debated and agreed upfront. Environmental values should not be sacrificed or compromised in the name of water savings, particularly when assessing the potential impact of built infrastructure associated with water efficiency works.

Should you have any queries in relation to this matter, please contact the Manager Water Resources, Glen Sutherland, on ☎ 03 5051 4368.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Burns". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Joan Burns**  
Chair