100 YEARS SERVING OUR COMMUNITY
Barwon Water
1908 - 2008

Our Ref: 15/050/0077B
Your Ref:
Enquiries To: Joe Adamski

August 29, 2008

Hon John Pandazolpolous, Chair
Victoria's Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament of Victoria
Parliament House
Spring Street
East Melbourne 3002

Dear Mr. Pandazolpolous

Re: Inquiry into Melbourne's future water supply

Barwon Water is pleased to be able to make this submission to the VENRC regarding the future of Melbourne's water supply. As you are aware Barwon Water region's future water supply system will be linked with the Melbourne system by the Melbourne to Geelong Interconnector, therefore this issue is important to the Geelong region. Barwon Water's comments are based on the terms of reference for the committee.

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

   - Water conservation has been a successful means of managing demand for the past thirty years and should continue to be supported as a cornerstone of sustainable resource management, regardless of future augmentation of supply.
   - Considerable water conservation programs and initiatives are in place already and targets have been established across Victoria, Barwon Water has had a similar water conservation target as Melbourne.
   - Permanent water savings plan is widely accepted by communities throughout Victoria, consideration should be given to increasing the saving rules consistent with current community expectations to drive water conservation through smart water rules.

2. **The collection of stormwater**

   - It is difficult to retrofit existing urban areas with improved stormwater conservation measures, but water sensitive urban design should be considered a mandatory design feature for all new developments.
   - Rainwater tanks can be an important component of stormwater management but they have limitations and should not be considered a panacea to water demand issues. The community needs to be better educated about the operating efficiency of rainwater tanks, as smaller tanks could be a false economy and fail to deliver the outcomes desired by customers.

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- Stormwater collection and storage in urban areas be investigated including the use of aquifers, stormwater retarding basins and wetlands.

3. **The reuse of treated wastewater**

- Reuse of treated wastewater offers considerable potential as a cost effective means of supplementing water supplies, but understand there are some hurdles to overcome in particular consideration of the current policy on the use of treated wastewater for indirect potable reuse and environmental flows. The technology to purify recycled water for these uses now exists.
- Third pipe schemes need to be cost effective and viable for all parties involved but if business cases for such schemes are positive then they do provide beneficial use of recycled water and potable water substitution.

4. **The use of groundwater**

- As demonstrated by Barwon Water sustainably managed groundwater can be key component of an integrated water supply.
- Barwon Water's understanding is that the groundwater resources available to Melbourne are limited by its brackish water quality characteristics.
- Barwon Water is undertaking Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) research project co-funded by the Victorian Water Trust. These investigations will ascertain the potential of a component of a future water supply option for the region. ASR is used overseas and its viability as an option for Melbourne should be considered.

5. **Small locally based desalination plants**

- This approach does not reflect the economies of scale that are possible only in larger plants, as well as where and how the water is delivered into urban water distribution systems.
- It is unlikely such plants would be cost effective at this time.

6. **Any other optional water source**

- No additional comments

Barwon Water appreciates the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours faithfully

Michael Malouf
Managing Director