



Our Reference: PFB:fob

19th December, 2012



Mr David Heeps
Chief Executive Officer
Essential Services Commission
Level 2 / 35 Spring Street
Melbourne 3000

Dear David

Re: GWMWater Water Plan – Horsham Rural City Council Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to GWMWater's Water Plan for the period 2013-18.

Council's submission is presented in the attachment to this letter.

Please contact either John Martin, Director Technical Services or myself if you have any questions regarding this submission.

Yours faithfully

PETER F BROWN
Chief Executive

BACKGROUND

This submission represents Horsham Rural City Council's comments in relation to the 2013-18 Water Plan prepared by GWMWater.

The focus of this submission is the supply of water to recreation lakes in the region and the related proposal for a customer charge of \$16 per customer to provide subsidised water for recreation lakes and grounds.

RECREATION LEVY AND RECREATION LAKE SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS

Council understands that GWMWater is proposing the introduction of a \$16 per customer levy (\$8 for concession card holders) which would enable a subsidised cost of water supply to recreation lakes and grounds across the GWMWater region.

The primary purpose of this levy is to subsidise the cost of water supply to the formally designated recreation lakes in the Wimmera-Mallee region. None of these designated lakes are within Horsham Rural City, as Council understands the list to be as follows:

- Warracknabeal Weir Pool (Yarriambiack Shire Council)
- Brim Weir Pool (Yarriambiack Shire Council)
- Beulah Weir Pool (Yarriambiack Shire Council)
- Lake Lascelles (Yarriambiack Shire Council)
- Marma Lake (Yarriambiack Shire Council)
- Tchum Lake (Buloke Shire Council)
- Green Lake (near Sea Lake) (Buloke Shire Council)
- Watchem Lake (Buloke Shire Council)
- Wooroonook Lake (Buloke Shire Council)
- Donald Caravan Park Lake (Buloke Shire Council)

This Council agrees with the merit of supplying these lakes, and does not want to detract from those supply arrangements.

Horsham Rural City Council supports the intent of the proposed levy on the basis that GWMWater ensures supply to some recreation lakes within this municipality in a manner which appropriately recognises the significant proportion of revenue this levy will raise within this municipality.

Specifically, it is proposed that GWMWater should formalise supply commitments to Green Lake, Toolondo Reservoir, and if practicable, Natimuk Lake. It is understood that GWMWater will continue to use Toolondo Reservoir as part of its reservoir network, so this commitment may not necessarily involve any changes to the intended operations for that reservoir.

It is understood that the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) is required to conduct a review of the system Bulk Entitlements to water within the Wimmera-Mallee supply system in 2013. This review may be the mechanism through

which a formal entitlement is secured for supply to Green Lake and potentially Natimuk Lake. Council should be actively consulted by GMMWater and/or DSE through this review process.

It should be noted that supply of water to all three of these lakes can be achieved without utilising any GMMWater infrastructure other than GMMWater's headworks supply network. Hence the significant additional costs associated with supply via the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline system will not be incurred in supply to these lakes.

RECREATION GROUNDS

It is also understood that as part of this recreation supply proposal, there will be a reduced cost for supply of water to recreation grounds. While supportive of this element of the proposal, it is important to note that Council will not be a significant beneficiary of this aspect of the proposal.

Council has invested significantly in alternative water supply works which means that only a limited supply is drawn from the GMMWater system in Horsham. Many of these alternative works were developed during the long drought of the late 1990s-2000s, in a period when the GMMWater system was heavily restricted, particularly for supply to recreation grounds.

Hence, Council is keen to emphasise the importance it places on receiving a supply to the lakes specified as part of this overall recreation levy proposal.