

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

23 April 2015

Committee Secretariat
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

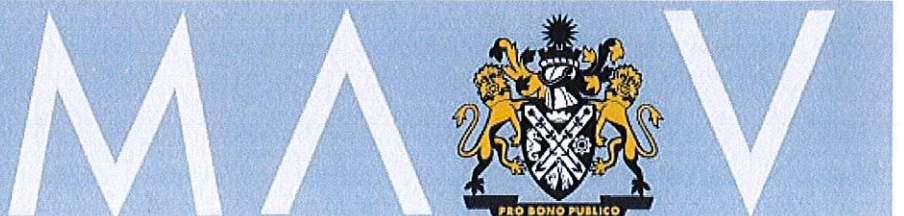
Dear Senators

Senate inquiry into stormwater resources in Australia

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is the legislated peak body representing Victorian Local Government. The MAV welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this Senate inquiry.

In Victoria councils are responsible for a significant proportion of stormwater infrastructure. Stormwater resources and stormwater infrastructure are managed at the local level to achieve a diverse and sometime competing array of objective. Some of the objectives and drivers of council stormwater management include:

- To secure the water supply of parks and gardens during drought
- Community concerns about drought, water supply security deteriorating waterway health
- Available government grant funding
- To achieve improvements to public health and liveability through more urban vegetation and green space
- Councillors and council-employed officers with particular whole-of-water-cycle management (WWCM) skills becoming organisational champions
- Because WWCM features could be integrated into scheduled asset renewal or a new asset, for example traffic calming infrastructure
- Changes to legislation such as clause 56.07-04 in the Victorian Planning Provisions.



Over the past few years the MAV has responded on behalf of its members to a number of state government consultations on water including:

- Office of Living Victoria's Developing the Metropolitan Whole-of-Water-Cycle Strategic Framework 2014-2024 Discussion Paper (2014)
- Draft Victorian Floodplain Management Strategy (2014)
- Office of Living Victoria's Melbourne's Water Future (2013)
- State Parliament Environment & Natural Resources Committee Inquiry into Flood Mitigation Infrastructure in Victoria (2011)

These submissions all contain relevant commentary on the challenges and opportunities of stormwater management at the municipal level and can be found on the MAV website or supplied upon request.

Key issues outlined in the submissions mentioned above include:

- The need for a clear model capable of achieving the ambitious stormwater, WWCM and flooding objectives
- The lack of certainty, clarity and detail regarding the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government and agencies operating in this sector
- The need for a new revenue stream for councils to fund WWCM asset lifecycle costs
- The need to develop a suite of tools or delivery pathways to WWCM that accommodate the diversity of the local government sector
- The need to distinguish between local community benefits, water corporation benefits and broader state-wide benefits, to provide for an appropriate basis for apportioning costs of infrastructure.
- The need for councils to be given the opportunity to directly inform stormwater legislative reviews to ensure existing barriers are overcome and unintended consequences are minimised.
- The concern that that costs, responsibilities and obligation for stormwater, WWCM and floodplain management will be inappropriately shifted to local government.

The MAV supports the current Senate Inquiry into the future management of stormwater in Australia and has confidence the work already undertaken by the MAV and Victorian councils will provide a constructive contribution to the standing committee's considerations.

We look forward to the final report and recommendations when the committee reports later in the year.

Yours sincerely

ROB SPENCE
Chief Executive Officer