

29 July 1999

Mr Ian Dundas  
Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

### **INQUIRY INTO CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT**

Dear Ian

Thank you for your letter dated 25 June 1999 inviting a submission to the inquiry into catchment management. The IMEA referred your request to the State Executive Directors and to the NSW Local Government Water Industry Directorate which was established in early 1999. The IMEA is closely associated with, and provides secretariat services for the Water Directorate which was initiated by water and sewerage system managers in NSW local government and concentrates specifically on water and sewerage systems management issues.

Water systems management is concerned with meeting drinking water quality objectives however it is dependent upon sound catchment management to minimise the risk of water supply contamination in the catchment. Catchment management is usually regulated by environmental health officers and is outside the area of responsibility of water and sewerage system management and therefore is also outside the Water Directorate's area of involvement. It is not appropriate for the Water Directorate to comment on catchment management issues however it can respond to the inquiry in general terms regarding its experience in the issues of catchment management which overlap and impact on systems management.

The Water Directorate Executive Committee resolved at its July meeting to refer the inquiry to the Local Government and Shires Associations and to the Department of Land and Water Conservation which no doubt you are consulting with. Of particular interest to the Water Directorate and of relevance to your inquiry is the *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* protocols that the DLWC is currently preparing for local government. The preparation of uniform protocols is a direct result of Water Directorate lobbying to Peter McClellan QC for inclusion in his recommendation report following the Sydney Water incident in 1998.

The draft protocols which are scheduled for release in 1999 comprise approximately seven sections, of which one section deals specifically with catchment management.

This section states and defines the principles underlying the catchment management process and outlines the impact of catchment management on the presence of *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* cysts in particular. The principles of land use, development issues and the multiple barrier approach in this section should also be applicable to all contaminants and therefore of interest to your inquiry.

The protocols will assist local government in minimising the risk of water supply contamination and in the management of contamination incidents should they occur. The protocols are being developed by the DLWC and by a working party consisting of the Water Directorate, the LGSA, NSW Health, Department of Local Government and the EPA. The catchment management section of the protocols, when finalised, should be of interest to your inquiry.

In respect to the terms of reference attached to your letter, the catchment management section of the protocols should be most appropriate to dot point four, ie the role of different levels of government, the private sector and the community in the management of catchment areas. For further information, please contact Gary Mitchell, Executive Officer Water Directorate on 9267 0746 or [garymi@magna.com.au](mailto:garymi@magna.com.au)

In addition, the Executive Director of the IMEA Queensland Division wishes to advise the Standing Committee that the Queensland Department of Natural Resources has engaged a consultant to prepare the Queensland Total Management Guidelines for Floodplain and Stormwater Management. Attached is a 9 page document, which outlines the project. For further details please contact Ray Moore, Executive Director IMEA Queensland Division on xxxxxx.

I hope this information is of some assistance and I wish you success with the inquiry.  
Yours sincerely

Don Sheffield  
Chief Executive Officer