

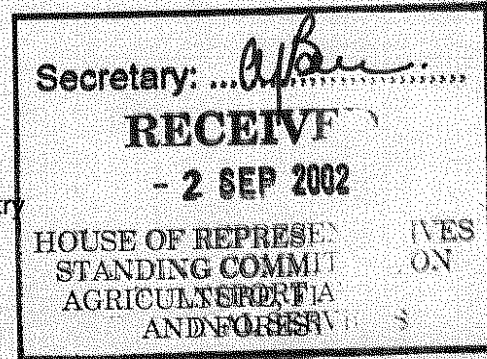


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28 August 2002

Secretary  
 Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
 House of Representatives  
 Parliament House  
 CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir/ Madam

**RE INQUIRY INTO FUTURE WATER SUPPLIES FOR AUSTRALIA'S INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITIES**

Golden Plains Shire is situated between the Victorian regional cities of Geelong and Ballarat. It is a rural municipality on the eastern edge of the Western District.

In March and April of 2000, extremely dry conditions over three years led to critically low water supplies for farmers in the Golden Plains Shire, particularly the area south of Rokewood moving into the Colac Otway and Surf Coast Shires. The conditions created a 'water drought' where onfarm water reserves and domestic supplies were significantly depleted or non-existent. Fodder reserves became alarmingly low contributing to land degradation and poor stock condition. Some farmers' bores had become too saline for stock and required costly treatment.

In response to the extreme conditions, Golden Plains Shire sought assistance from State and Federal Government for drought relief. Unfortunately, the situation did not meet the 'Exceptional Circumstances Event' criteria. Nevertheless, Golden Plains Shire continued to investigate means of addressing the water shortage.

To this end, Golden Plains Shire has been involved in a number of working groups relating to dry season and drought conditions. This experience has provided significant insight into issues relating to sustainable water supplies across this region.

Particular working groups looking at related water supply issues include, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Drought Committee; South West Seasonal Conditions Task Force and Drought Management Taskforce both involving regional municipalities, the Victorian Farmers Federation and the Corangamite Catchment Rural Counselling Service.

Key issues identified by the groups include:

- Access to water (e.g standpipes, hydrants, bores, streams)
- Information regarding ground water locations for bore sinking
- Licence fees for ground water bores
- Access to/ extension of urban water supplies;
- Information and planning support for water reticulation and use and potential for fodder deficiencies.
- Establishing a grid of drought relief bores.



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Council is keen to assist your inquiry into future water supplies for industries and communities and looks forward to your visit to the Shire on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002 at Barunah Park as part of your inquiry into future water supplies.

Yours faithfully

**ROD NICHOLLS**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**