

Our ref: R90/0920-03
Further contact: David Hale
28 July 1999

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

Dear Mr Dundas

I refer to the Standing Committee's Inquiry into Catchment Management.

The Associations support catchment management and the various specific aspects of natural resource management which relate to catchment management. For the information of the Standing Committee, following are the relevant extracts from the Associations' Policy Statements on Water Supply and Resources.

Local Government acknowledges that water is a scarce resource which must be carefully managed on a catchment basis, in cooperation with all three spheres of government, and in consultation with key stakeholders. To this end Local Government must be represented on all government boards and peak committees established to develop and implement policy in this area, with representation arranged through the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW where this is appropriate.

Further, to conserve this precious resource, Local Government supports the setting of realistic water quality objectives and river flow objectives, and the development of innovative, cost effective water recycling and re-use schemes including the use of rainwater tanks, subject to appropriate legislative indemnity.

Local Government supports the principle of transparent cost reflective pricing, on the basis that this provides governments with information on which to base subsidy payments and meet community service obligations.

Local Government supports the management of land and water resources on a water catchment basis. It supports the actions being taken by the Department of Land and Water Conservation and other catchment management organisations to support work to reduce phosphorous in waterways. It also supports the use of riparian buffer zones as a means of reducing the flow of non-naturally occurring pollutants from farming lands into waterways.

Local Government should have legislative power to control landuse practices which may cause stormwater pollution, in cooperation with other spheres of government.

Local Government believes that stormwater should be managed on a catchment management basis. Where stormwater infrastructure is owned by more than one party, there should be a cooperative decision making process to develop management policies.

The Associations believe that Local Government should have the lead role in all aspects of natural resource management including total catchment management and native vegetation management. Local Government is the recognised land manager throughout New South Wales and responsibility for natural resource management is a logical extension of this.

In 1998, the Associations commissioned a research paper on the subject. A copy is attached for the Committee's information. The paper has been endorsed by both Associations' Annual Conferences.

Finally, we have a significant area of concern with the proliferation of Committees charged with various aspects of natural resource management. River Management Committees, Landcare, Total Catchment Management Committees themselves, and Groundwater Committees are by no means a full list of these structures.

I would be happy to elaborate on any of these brief comments.

I would be pleased if you would place the Associations on your mailing list and keep me informed of the deliberations of the Standing Committee.

Yours sincerely

Murray Kidnie
Secretary