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AUSTRALIAN
WATER
ASSOCIATION

13 June 2007

The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland
– Traveston Crossing Dam**

AWA is grateful for the opportunity to appear at the public hearing in Canberra on 4 June 2007. In response to a question on the use of recycled water for potable purposes and the extent to which this occurs in a *planned* or *unplanned* manner globally, I am pleased to offer some more information.

The Queensland Water Commission (QWC) representatives, who gave evidence during the afternoon session on 4 June, also tabled a Fact Sheet of information on examples of *Planned* Indirect Potable Recycling, including: Orange County California; Upper Occoquan, Virginia; Singapore; Veurne-Ambacht, Belgium; and Essex, UK. There are other planned IPR examples omitted, for instance at Windhoek, Namibia and Scottsdale, Arizona.

I will focus on *Unplanned* Indirect Potable Recycling. There are countless 'unplanned' indirect potable water recycling schemes in Australia and around the world. Wherever water supply schemes draw from rivers at locations downstream of other urban communities, the rivers contain treated effluent which has been discharged upstream.

Examples of unplanned water reuse include:

- In the UK, indirect potable reuse via discharges to rivers and subsequent water withdrawals downstream occurs widely but mainly in the major rivers in the east and south. There are about 350 sewage treatment plants that discharge into the River Thames (upstream of **London's** water supply), and this indirect potable reuse downstream accounts for about 12% of the available water resources in an average year. In the lower parts of the basin, that figure can rise to 70% in a dry year.
- It is estimated that in summer, half of the volume of the Seine River at **Paris** (water supply) is treated sewage effluent. This figure is likely to increase a lot once the river reaches the city of **Rouen** close to the sea.

- The **Las Vegas** Water District, Nevada, returns about 180 GL/year back to Lake Mead, its water source.
- In Japan, **Osaka** receives **Kyoto's** effluent via the Yodogawa River.
- **New York** city receives its drinking water from the Catskills Mountains, where there are numerous wastewater discharges.
- In **South Africa** treated effluent is mostly returned to rivers, making up a large fraction of downstream communities' water supplies.
- In **Australia**, most communities drawing water supplies from rivers, particularly inland rivers – such as those in the Murray-Darling Basin, would expect that effluent from upstream communities would be mixed in the river flow.

If you need any more information, or to have technical issues explained, please contact me on 02 9495-9909 and I'd be very glad to assist.

Yours sincerely,



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