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Our Ref: A953 (AC:TB)

16 March 2006

Inquiry on Country Water and Wastewater Pricing  
Economic Regulation Authority  
PO Box 8469  
Perth Business Centre  
PERTH WA 6849

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Inquiry on Country Water and Wastewater Pricing**

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on country water and wastewater (sewerage) pricing issues in regional areas. However, the City's main interest lies not so much with wastewater pricing as with wastewater re-use.

The City of Mandurah notes that the WA Government's State-wide 2003 sustainability planning document, the *Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy*, makes only brief mention of wastewater re-use. The Strategy lists the following wastewater re-use initiatives under the chapter 'Our Water Future':

- Objective - Achievement of significant wastewater re-use
- Actions underway – Draft guidelines released for the re-use of grey water by households
- Actions – Implement the *State Water Strategy*
  - Establish a local government water campaign to implement a sustainable water management program in partnership with the Western Australian Local Government Association and the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives, to assist local government to address local water management issues, including:
    - Research and trial innovative approaches to support sustainable drainage management and establish a series of pilot projects for drainage water re-use at neighbourhood and/or streetscape level
    - Undertake education and training of local government and key stakeholders on good planning an on-ground stormwater management using the Stormwater Management Planning approach.

The State Government also released the *State Water Strategy* in 2003, designed to promote Government, industry and community collaboration to secure Western Australia's water future. The Strategy identified five key focus areas to ensure a sustainable water future for Western Australia, one of which is 'achieving significant advances in water reuse'.

The State Government has committed to the following water re-use outcomes:

- Achieving 20 per cent re-use of treated wastewater by 2012, concentrating on large scale scheme-based re-use options
- Establishing the Kwinana Water Recycling Plant by 2004
- Establishing a steering committee to agree upon and endorse strategies for wastewater re-use
- Commissioning a trial park irrigation project in the City of Nedlands
- Developing and implementing an effective communication/marketing strategy to address community concerns about water recycling
- Undertake technical investigations on projects currently taking place in WA
- Prepare a final wastewater re-use strategy by December 2003
- Establish regulated areas in which greywater re-use systems are permitted
- Encourage industry, local government and institutions to research and develop domestic-scale greywater re-use systems, through the *Premier's Water Foundation*.

Further, the *Premier's Water Foundation* was established to promote and enhance water related research and development activities within Western Australia, via a grants program that gives priority funding to projects that, through innovation, education and research, assist in meeting the primary areas of need for water research as outlined in the *State Water Strategy*. Successful projects for Round 1 in 2004 have been announced, and Round 2 applications closed in November 2005. Round 2 projects are due to be announced in May.

The former WA Premier, the Hon. Dr Geoff Gallop, announced the development of a *State Water Plan*, and supporting regional water plans, in September 2005, to provide strategic direction and long-term water management principles for Western Australia. A draft *State Water Plan* and *South West Regional Water Plan* is due for release by August.

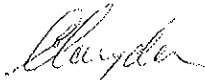
An Office of Water Strategy was established in July 2005 to provide strategic advice to the Government on water resource management and planning, including facilitation of water recycling projects. I understand that the Office of Water Strategy was replaced by a new Department of Water in January 2006.

The City views the *State Water Strategy*, and with it, the creation of the *State Water Plan* and regional water plans as a positive step in furthering the development of wastewater re-use. Local government can play an active role in conserving water resources, and should be consulted widely during the implementation process.

However, the City is concerned that many of the initiatives of the *State Water Strategy* are yet to achieve fruition. Of particular concern is the lack of information relating to the proposed Wastewater Re-use Strategy. It is felt that this initiative has much to offer, and could possibly influence the pricing strategy for potable water.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the current Inquiry. We look forward to viewing the final report in April/May.

Yours sincerely



Allan Claydon  
**Director Works & Services**