

18 January 2008

NRM South comment: Future Regulation of the Tasmanian Water and Sewerage Sector – Part A Proposed Position Paper, November 2007

In principle, NRM South supports reform towards an integrated approach that will optimise economic, social and environmental outcomes.

In particular, we welcome:

- review of water supply planning process and resourcing
- promotion and adoption of water use efficiency and re-use
- adoption of environmentally sustainable levels of extraction
- improvement in water pricing mechanisms
- improvement of catchment management to enhance catchment health and condition of water resources (and therefore drinking water quality); and
- recognition of the connectivity between surface and groundwater resources and management as a single resource where relevant

NRM South would also welcome:

- integration of state government water planning and development processes that impact on water supply; and
- consideration of the integration of stormwater, irrigation and non-reticulated water supply and wastewater services

The paper notes that catchment management is encouraged on a voluntary basis through the *Natural Resource Management Act 2004* and Regional Natural Resource Management Committees.

NRM South defines catchment management as the integrated management of natural resources across an entire catchment to maintain or improve catchment health. This involves ongoing engagement and co-operation of a wide range of stakeholders and cross tenure management (including private and public land managers, state and local government, industry, research organisations, recreational users, water authorities and environmental, Aboriginal and community organisations). To facilitate integrated catchment management a thorough understanding of catchment resources and values, associated threats (including cumulative impacts of development and land use change) and best practice processes and management is required. Significant resources are also required to plan, co-ordinate and manage a catchment across stakeholders and tenures.

NRM South has observed that very few stakeholders have the time or resources required to effectively participate in catchment management and cross tenure management, and that co-ordination is lacking. In 2007 we conducted a region wide consultation to establish our



stakeholders' natural resource management priorities. This consultation further highlighted the need for increased resources and coordination for improved catchment management.

Water management, being the allocation and use of freshwater resources while meeting environmental needs, is a vital factor in catchment condition. Progress with development of Water Management Plans across the State has been limited. Only 5 out of 45 catchments across the State have completed water management plans.

The Part A Position Paper focuses primarily on reticulated water delivery systems and sewerage infrastructure. As with water management, water and sewerage systems and infrastructure are a key component of catchment condition. To ensure the sustainable management of Tasmania's water resources, water and sewerage reform needs to be informed by the broader context of catchment and water management. Where appropriate, catchment and water management should also inform water and land use planning and development.

If you would like any further information about NRM South or these comments please contact Aniela Grun on 6208 6177 or at nap.water@nrmsouth.org.au.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

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