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Department for Sustainability and Environment  
Attention: Sustainable Water Strategies Branch, Office of Water  
P O Box 500  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

**Re: Northern Region Sustainable Water Strategy Discussion Paper**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Northern Regional Sustainable Water Strategy Discussion Paper.

Following are some comments for your consideration in developing the Northern Regional Sustainable Water Strategy:

The Discussion Paper suggests reduced water availability within the River Murray system. In comparison, previous publications by the Murray Water Entitlement Committee, *Sharing the Murray* (October 1997) shows greater levels of water availability. The current low levels in the Murray were not contemplated in the allocation of entitlement to urban water authorities. Clearly allocations of zero to say 40% are not tenable (i.e. no lower than 50% in any one year). It is suggested that the Strategy consider a fixed allocation to urban authorities up to a predetermined allocation level, then topped up by a variable allocation thereafter.

Consideration should be given to allow individual households to purchase additional water if required. This could be managed either through a full trading market with individual metering or allow individual households to move between stages by paying a fixed amount to move between stages or allowing unlimited use by introducing exponentially stepped tariffs. Consideration should also be given to offset tariffs for individual households that employ water conservation methodologies or technology.

Although the Discussion Paper deals broadly with the matter of water conservation, greater consideration should be given to sustainable water management options such as water reuse.

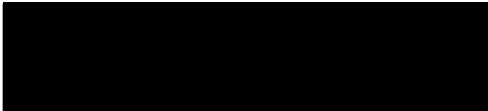
Other matters that requires further consideration includes the social impact of water on the community, water availability and population growth policy and the risks associated with the non-availability of water to deal with emergencies (such as fire).

The above comments reflect the views and suggestions of individual Council staff and do represent a position by Council. Should you require clarification of the above

matters raised please contact Council's Director Sustainable Development on



Yours sincerely



**Peter Marshall**  
**Chief Executive Officer**