

RiverBasinnews

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT SOCIETY INC MAY 03 ISSN 1323-2223-91

NOTICE OF MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the River Basin Management Society Incorporated No. A 11870

Will be held at 12.30 PM on 20th. November 2003

At **Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre**

Cnr Bell Street & St Georges Road, Preston. Melway Map 30 F1

In conjunction with the Society's seminar. All members are encouraged to come even for this meeting



INTRODUCTION TO MELBOURNE 2030

Melbourne 2030 – Planning for Sustainable Growth is a 30-year plan to manage growth and change across metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding region. The strategy was released by the Victorian Government in October 2002 after almost two years of background research and consultation.

Melbourne 2030 combines a vision statement, nine key directions - each with several policy statements - and 226 initiatives which represent a five-year action program. The key directions are:

1. A more compact city
2. Better management of metropolitan growth
3. Networks with regional cities
4. A more prosperous city
5. A great place to be
6. A fairer city
7. A greener city
8. Better transport links
9. Better planning decisions, careful management.

Six draft implementation plans were released at the same time as the main strategy, providing more detail on six topics of core importance to Melbourne 2030 – the urban growth boundary, growth areas, housing, activity centres, green wedges and integrated transport.

Current projections indicate that Melbourne is expected to grow by 1 million people (620,000 households) by 2030. Households are becoming smaller – about 90% of the net increase in households are expected to have only one or two people in them – and the population is also ageing. As a result of these and other changes in lifestyles, a greater diversity of housing choice is required. Melbourne 2030 aims to cater for these changing needs while ensuring Melbourne remains one of the world's most liveable and prosperous cities and is also environmentally sustainable. The basic thrust of the strategy is to encourage development of a more compact city by:

- increasing the proportion of new housing within the built-up area – in activity centres and in other strategic development sites
- ensuring activity centres are located on the Principal Public Transport network
- restricting outward growth to several 'growth areas' separated by green wedges
- creating a city which encourages use of public transport, walking and cycling
- establishing an urban growth boundary and protecting green wedges
- establishing strong links to regional cities such as Geelong and Ballarat.

Although Direction 7, A Greener City, is the main focus of 'environmental' policies and initiatives, it is important to understand that environmental sustainability underpins all of the Melbourne 2030 directions. For example:

- protecting the green wedges will mean protecting important natural habitat and ensuring that development is based on principles such as land capability
- focusing development around activity centres and promoting use of public transport, walking and cycling will help reduce car dependency and reduce energy use/greenhouse gas emissions
- promoting a fairer city, including affordable housing, is consistent with energy efficient housing and improving public transport
- ensuring Melbourne remains a great place to be will mean protecting open space, coasts and waterways

Many of the Melbourne 2030 initiatives outlined in Direction 7 intersect with other key Government programs – such as the Victorian Greenhouse Strategy, and Securing our Water Future. The creation of the Department and Environment (DSE) reflects the Government's commitment to strengthening its environmental policy platform and over the next twelve months will be aiming to create a framework for environmental sustainability, to provide:

- a clearer policy context for the

achievement of a healthy and improving Victorian environment;

- a strategic vision for addressing existing environmental problems, and preventing them in future;
- a recognition of the interactions between environmental outcomes and economic and social outcomes.

The creation of DSE also provides an opportunity to better integrate private land use planning with public land management and catchment management.

Melbourne 2030: implications on urban water cycle and addressing the challenge of adaptation

The Melbourne 2030 discussion document suggests that the population of metropolitan Melbourne will increase by up to one million persons, in the next 30 years, accommodated in some 620,000 new households. Policies put forward in Melbourne 2030 encourage infill development within established metropolitan urban areas, to reduce pressure for urban expansion, which would be traditionally be generated by the construction of new houses on the outskirts of Melbourne.

CSIRO climate change projections over Victoria indicate that by 2030, an increase in average annual temperature of 0.5 to 1.4 0C, an increase in the frequency of hot summer days and a decrease in the frequency of frosty winter days, -10% to +2% change in winter and spring rainfall and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events.

The above facts indicate that there will be changes in climate, population and urban land use in Melbourne. The obvious question to ask is what would be the implications of such changes on various aspects of the urban water cycle, which

includes water supplies and use, wastewater and stormwater generation, groundwater aquifers, environmental flows in rivers, quality and volume of water discharged to inland and marine environments? In addition, what will these changes mean for the economic costs and social outcomes of service infrastructure provision and maintenance? A potential impact of an increase in temperature and decrease in spring and winter rainfall will be a reduction in streamflow volumes in harvesting catchments and an increase in water demand. Water demand will also increase due to population growth and increase in number of households. Reduction in supply yield and an increase in water demand can lead to one of three responses, (i) supply augmentation or (ii) demand management or (iii) a mixture of both. Traditional supply augmentation approaches such as more abstractions from the Yarra River and other water ways in the Melbourne Region, will have implications on the ecological health of the river system and water ways in the Melbourne Region.

The compact city concept has consequences on the generation of stormwater runoff and associated contaminants, which will have implications on the health of urban waterways. As the city becomes more compact, the potential for flash flooding may increase. Combined with the likelihood of an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events under climate change, flooding in urbanised areas could become more severe and frequent, which will have negative social, economic and environmental implications. Also, as the population grows, there will be an increase in the peak wastewater volumes, which will have implications on collection and treatment of wastewater and disposal of effluents to receiving waters and the management of biosolids. While it is possible to take measures to mitigate the rate of change occurring in greenhouse gas emissions, population and urban landform, it is not possible to prevent these changes occurring, which indicates a strong need for adaptation measures to be implemented. The major challenges that we are facing today include understanding the degree of impact that the aforementioned changes could have on various aspects of the urban water cycle, determining adaptation options and taking suitable actions to implement appropriate adaptation measures. Some of the specific challenges are:

- How do we meet growing needs for water while managing water resources in more sustainable manner? Do we need potable water to meet all urban needs or

can we also harvest lower quality water to meet the selected water demands? In that case, to what extent can we harvest water locally within urban areas from alternative sources, rather than importing water from distant catchments? What are the alternative sources that are available locally – stormwater, treated effluent, groundwater – how viable are they, economically, socially and environmentally?

- How do we maintain the health of rivers, urban waterways and marine environments if we are faced with the increased volumes of waterborne waste, increased supply diversions from rivers and major waterways and increased volumes of stormwater discharging to urban waterways?

- What method should we use to compare viability of various adaptation strategies? It is increasingly obvious that the traditional method of cost/benefit analysis based on only physical infrastructure is inappropriate. So, how do we internalise externalities such as amenity values and upstream and downstream impacts? Is an assessment method based on the concept of sustainability more appropriate?

It is important to note that the above-mentioned challenges are not only applicable to Melbourne, but also to other cities in Australia.

CSIRO Urban Water has already undertaken research to address a number of the above challenges. Current and previous research projects include: sustainable stormwater service provision in Indented Head in Geelong, which aims at investigating feasibility of utilising stormwater in coastal urban areas; sustainable water service provision in Heathwood development in Brisbane, Edmondson Park in Sydney, Papamoa in New Zealand, Gungahera and Wooden Valley in Canberra and Bergins Greens in Melbourne; development of a framework for measuring the sustainability of urban water systems, assessment of potential impacts of climate change and population growth on various aspects of the urban water cycle in Melbourne and assessment of potential impacts of climate change on water supply, demand and the system security of the Benalla water supply system in North East Victoria.

Recently, CSIRO initiated 'Healthy Country Flagship Program', which will build on current research to further address these urban water challenges, as well as to address significant water related issues in rural Australia. The CSIRO Healthy Country Flagship Program operates on five regions across Australia: Lower Burdekin, South East Murray Darling Basin, Southwest Western

Australia, Great Barrier Reef and Melbourne Mega Metro Region. The Melbourne Mega Metro Region (MMMR) extends beyond the Melbourne urban area, covering the broader geographic region, which incorporates significant features such as Melbourne's supply catchments, the major receiving water bodies (Port Phillip and WesternPort Bay) and the surrounding hinterland of the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The objectives of the MMMR Flagship Project are:

1. To manage the water and ecosystems of Melbourne Mega Metro Region to accommodate growth, climate change & community needs and preferences.

2. To create urban water systems and urban forms that maximise environmental, social and economic benefits through research and demonstration.

3. To develop and interpret householder preferences for alternative future water service provision systems

The key research challenges addressed by the MMMR Flagship Project include:

- How do we create "water-smart" megacities of the future and what mix(es) of urban water systems & technologies create a "water-smart" city?

- How do we ensure that our cities have sufficient water supplies to both grow and be secure during drought?

- How do we achieve an increase in the use and total economic value of each litre of water?

- How do we improve the health of our bays, rivers and waterways?

- How do we transition to future integrated urban water systems?

- How do we enhance both the built and natural environment within urban areas?

- How do we interpret householder preferences for alternative future water service provision systems?

- How do we measure customer quality of life benefits and costs simultaneously with basic levels of service issues?

More details of MMMR Flagship Project and how to become a partner of this major CSIRO initiative and the other research activities carried out by CSIRO Urban Water can be obtained from the authors of this newsletter.

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Spring Seminar Natural Resource Management, Fact or Fiction: Where does Melbourne 2030 fit?

The Spring Seminar organised by the RBMS will focus on *Melbourne 2030 Planning for Sustainable Growth* and its implications on natural resource management.

Melbourne 2030 is a 30-year plan to manage growth and change across metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding region. It will guide government agencies in matters such as infrastructure investment, the location of facilities, land-use planning and policy decisions.

This Seminar will be an opportunity to debate and share information between scientists, managers, planners, developers and the community and aims to provide those who attend with a framework to influence the implementation and impacts of Melbourne 2030 on the management of the environment.

Seven speakers from various backgrounds will discuss influences of Melbourne 2030 on aspects of natural resource management:

- Introduction to Melbourne 2030 (*Rhonda Boyle, DSE*)
- Regional River Health Strategy (*David Buntine, PPWPCMA*)
- Maintaining Melbourne's Green Wedges (*Michael Buxton, RMIT*)
- 2030's impact on Urban Waterways (*Paul Sinclair, Environment Victoria*)
- Local Government Perspective on 2030 (*Local Government*)
- SEPP and 2030 (*Kelly O'Shanessy, EPA*)
- Melbourne 2030: implications on urban water cycle and addressing the challenge of adaptation (*Shiroma Maheepala, CSIRO*)

The seminar will be held on Thursday 20th November 2003, 9.00am – 5.00pm at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre, Corner of Bell Street and St Georges Road, Preston. Registration brochures and more information is available on the website (www.rbms.com.au) or contact Shelley Heron at heron1@optusnet.com.au or Bob Rau at bobrau1@bigpond.com.

A couple of articles have been provided in this newsletter to give a taste of what will be presented at the seminar. It will be a really good chance to be introduced to Melbourne 2030 and discuss its implications on natural resource management.

Water and Sustainability: Exploring the New Agenda

The Latrobe campus, Beechworth, with its elegant white buildings set amongst green lawns and canopies of mature native and introduced trees, set the scene for PIA Victoria's Water and Sustainability half day seminar on Friday afternoon, 16th May. Some 30 people from country Victoria, Melbourne, New South Wales and the ACT came to hear guest speakers on various aspects of integrating water resource and catchment management into planning schemes. Rosemary Cousin reports on the speakers' main messages.

John MacImerney, PIA's National President outlined the new policies under development by the PIA nationally – particularly on sustainable development and water.

Dr Phil Suter, Latrobe University – the "Doctor Doolittle" of little creatures, spoke of the important role in assessing water quality and river health played by *aquatic macroinvertebrates* – those small critters without backbones who play a vital role in the food chain but usually goes unnoticed. They include molluscs, yabbies and crayfish, mayflies and crustaceans who like to live in slow or fast flowing, temporary or permanent waterways. Their names tell us about their habitat needs (some like oxygen rich environments, others do not); their relative numbers and locations tell a lot about water quality. Research into aquatic fauna is starting to tell us with greater certainty about the health of our water resources, and predict unacceptable physical, biological and chemical environmental changes, including overuse of agricultural chemicals and land developments. Two important national indices are the *River Condition Assessment Index* that covers both biota and environment conditions, and an aquatic biota index - *Aus Rivas* - a predictive model that compares locations with un-impacted sites.

There is still much work required to understand fully the critical messages these small creatures are telling us about the extent and nature of negative human environmental impacts. Phil Suter still sees problems in the quality of both indices - particularly the coarse classifications of fauna into families not species, and the difficulty in obtaining an accurate before-and-after human impact snapshot – sadly there are no un-impacted lower rivers left in Australia. Several things are certain though. Many invertebrate species are highly sensitive to environmental changes and they therefore provide a great insight into water quality and land use impacts. Phil Suter recommends that impact assessment studies should accompany all major land use and development proposals.

Sarah Nicholas, Chair of the North East Catchment Management Authority (CMA) spoke of the role of the ten Victorian

CMAs, in water quality, water sustainability and catchment management. CMAs see water in a total catchment context. Their statutory role includes preparation of a Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS), which is accredited by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Federal Government. These strategies set priorities and targets and provide a focus for working with people who manage land and use water.

In the context of the 1994 and 1995 COAG water reform agreements¹, Victoria has introduced a suite of legislation, including the amendments to the *Water Act 1989* dealing with irrigation farm dams. Up and coming actions include giving the Essential Services Commission (ESC) a key role in water pricing, establishing a Water Trust and taking action to improve on-farm and in-city water efficiency, plus working towards *e-flows*: environmental flows for rivers such as the Snowy and the Murray.

The new Victorian water agenda includes the Healthy Rivers initiative and the Victorian Water Trust - a dedicated and stable fund for expenditure on catchments and water issues, including groundwater management, water reuse, drainage and flood control and improved irrigation efficiencies. The Healthy Rivers Strategy for example acknowledges the important role of the Ovens and Mitchell Rivers – both unregulated rivers still have full ecological sequences in operation. This provides a snapshot of what a river environments should look like, which will help to gauge Victorian *e-flows*.

Policy priorities in the next round include a focus on sustainable irrigation, water resources for regional (economic) development; improving the match between land use and land capability (particularly social *and* economic value adding to regional economies, water pricing, recycling and reclamation, further work on institutional arrangements, and potential revenue generation for CMAs. One method under close consideration in this respect is the "Improvement-in-Net-Gain principles of the Victorian Native Vegetation Framework"

Doing a quick reality check, Sarah Nicholas emphasised the difficulties imposed by funding shortages - the

North East CMA for example, has no funds for discretionary expenditure or ways of improving its revenue stream at present. Problems that are more significant exist though in interface between land use and catchment management instruments. Sarah confirmed an emphasised the major theme of the seminar – the biggest challenges, and critical for success in sustainability terms, is to link and align RCS with local planning schemes. The North East CMA's message is to retain the original economic, social and environmental bottom line in sustainability terms. To this end, priorities include the use of integrated decision-making; applying the precautionary principle and the concept of intergenerational equity; the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and improved valuation, pricing and incentives mechanisms (such as polluter pays, and product stewardship; plus cross-departmental collaboration).

For CMAs, the importance of working together cannot be overstated! Some of the critical issues are:

- Victoria's three Acts with the greatest impact on natural resource management - the Catchment and Land Protection Act, the Planning and Environment Act and the Water Act. All these Acts pull in the same direction, but fine-tuning is required for the legal framework to work more effectively together - not the least important task is for the full incorporation of regional catchment strategies into planning schemes. As a first step, Municipal Strategic Statements – the front piece of all Victorian planning schemes, should be required to take into account the RCS. This initiative should go hand in hand with more awareness building on the full dimensions of sustainability, with sustainability built in as a required outcome across CMAs and Councils.
- RCSs determine priorities at a regional scale, but the regional scale is often too big to make sense of for planning schemes. Many RCS details are contained in sub-plans - implementation relies upon interagency and Council knowledge of these details, and cooperative action.
- CMAs would like to use planning scheme controls, particularly overlays to improve regional capacity to manage water resources, but this is not generally favoured by land use planning authorities. From a CMA viewpoint, overlays can provide an essential 'stick' - control over development, but could also provide a 'carrot' - incentives for better management.
- Councils have legal means not available to CMAs that could be applied to water quality and catchment management

issues. Biodiversity incentives at Surf Coast and Weed Management Plans in Melton Councils apply differential ratings, as levers are two good examples.

Bernadette George of BG Solutions spoke on lessons from demonstration projects in urban sustainability. A win-win-win 'blue print' approach to sustainable development is applied by the Urban and Regional Land Corporation (now trading as VicUrban) in planning for the new Aurora community in the outer northern Melbourne suburb of Epping North. The project team's starting point was to ask 'What do we have to do and who will help us create a truly triple bottom line development?' Their solution was a comprehensive package for urban development that aims to embed positive outcomes for the community in economic, social and environmental terms, to give people more choice through better design, applying water sustainability and environmental management principles. The local structure plan for Aurora draws on a 17-point statement of goals and objectives developed by the project team to guide the planning process.

Commencing with an assessment of the natural environment, required urban densities to ensure greater housing choice and walkable catchments and supporting infrastructure such as walking and cycle paths and roadways, the location of shops and schools are designed to respect and protect higher value ecosystems. Principles of convenient distance, safety, and multiple use and site permeability were in-built. "People will walk if they are offered local destinations and supportive infrastructure is designed to encourage them. Higher densities and co-location of key facilities enable a viable public transport system and provision of above-standard public open space by generating higher volume of trips to predictable destinations."

The Aurora development will see wastewater reused in domestic toilets and supplementing "rain gardens" incorporated in the private open space of each dwelling. Water sensitive urban design principles are visible throughout the entire development, including roadside swales, choice of street and landscape species and low water consumption techniques in each dwelling. Details of open space maintenance via Council or bodies corporate are still emerging. Community development and education strategies are also being prepared as important complements to any blueprint planning for the development, to ensure implementation / day-to-day living actually carries through the intentions of

strategic planning for Aurora.

Two key points emerged from discussion at the seminar. Firstly, it was clear that Councils in rural Victoria are keen to see the VicUrban approach applied in non-metropolitan Melbourne. Secondly, the clear and long-term cost effectiveness of this approach is a key to motivating the private sector to take on the major lessons provided by the Aurora Project.

Justin Hanney, CEO, Rural City of Wangaratta provided a local government viewpoint on water, sustainability and planning. Water comes to the fore during periods of shortage (drought) or excess (flood) or in relation to some environmental catastrophe such as bushfires. Wangaratta, located in the King River catchment, near the confluence of the King and Oven Rivers, draws its water supply directly drawn from the Owens River. Council recognises that flood and fire management have a significant impact on water quality. One example of where local government is in a key position is in the control of stormwater. Through Wangaratta's comprehensive Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP), Council has set out a range of management strategies to reduce stream pollution, by setting planning and building controls to reduce on-site run off. In the longer term, Council aims to move to more sustainable strategic solutions, especially using the MSS to set the policy and political agenda.

On a regional scale, eleven Councils in the NE region are collaboratively looking at transport, land use, water and sustainability indicators (amongst many regional issues), in part within the context of the Melbourne 2030 strategy. For Councils in the region, a fundamental, underlying concern is the lack of a Statewide strategy to balance Melbourne 2030.

Wangaratta has developed a partnership with CMAs, particularly Goulburn Murray Water, and councils in the NE to start to respond to longer-term issues and vision setting. "Planning, community education and leadership - are key ingredients for taking the community with you in water sustainability and catchment management. Gaining community support for sustainability requires education, partnership building and participatory policy development and implementation; including community participation in developing and improving planning controls, and hands-on floodplain and catchment management."

Local government has a fundamental leadership role in relation to sustainability focused water management – not the

Findings from the MAV's Integrating Local Planning and Regional Planning Project

least of which is in terms of economic development. Justin Hanney concluded with several questions:

- Are we setting the right agricultural balance for the driest continent?
- How do we redress the lack of resources available to and capacity of non-metropolitan councils to address critically water quality and resource management issues? and specifically;
- How do we overcome the fundamental shortage of skilled professionals such as planners and environmental health officers in rural Victorian councils?

Greg Harrison, Maunsells provided an overview of the MAV's "Integrating Local Planning and Regional Planning Project." Funded by the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality (the NAP), the three stage project, guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from local government, the MAV and CMAs is looking at the basis for greater integration of RCSs into Planning schemes. Workshops in Stage 1 have been followed up by a detailed review of five MSSs (Whittlesea, Loddon, Wellington, Yarriambiack and Mitchell) and a review of RCSs in the Glenelg-Hopkins, Wimmera, Goulburn-Broken, Mallee and Corangamite catchments. While the small sample made it difficult to draw across the board conclusions for all MSSs or RCSs the project findings are indicative of core problems – Summarised in the table below.

The MAV project suggests that an appendix to a RCMS might be prepared to fit into each MSS within the catchment region. "Municipal profiles need to define the broader regional/catchment management context including natural resource assets and management issues, which could be drawn from the RCS. The RCS vision and broad goals need to also include land use outcomes, objectives, strategic implementation targets and performance measures, which could be, at least in part, shared."

If the ultimate aim is better integration between catchment management strategies and planning schemes, this could be achieved through streamlined approvals processes and actions targeted at improving coordination and communication including shared knowledge bases, complementary resource expenditures, and combined education and training programs. To this end, the project recommends preparation of referral guidelines and a best practice catchment management planning checklist, quarterly planning forums and complementary information brochures. Those consulted highlighted the nonsensical difference in planning time frames for RCSs (seven yearly cycles)

Municipal Strategic Statement Review Findings	Regional Catchment Management Strategy Review Findings
A poor level of consistency between RCS – at the strategic level and funding/ implementation levels	Some fundamental differences in planning format
Limited reference or response to natural resource management issue	The vision and objectives in RCSs are very broad
Limited direct reference to CMAs	Some RCSs saw essential links with planning schemes, principally overlays, while others did not.
Poor development and integration of performance monitoring and review standards	Some RCSs saw overlays as being essential for implementation; while others did not. Overall, there was limited direct reference to MSSs of local planning policies.
	Targets were largely ambit claims to support funding – needed to be achievable, manageable and show what will contribute to achievement.

and Planning Schemes (four yearly review cycles) – bringing these cycles into closer alignment may overcome some of the fundamental gaps now evident. Further details, including a CD giving results of this project can be found at URL=

www.mav.asn.au

Melva Ryan, Project Manager, capped the forum with a report on findings of the Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) Municipal Implementation Plan Project. On secondment from Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melva is researching into practical ways to integrate RCSs into the local government system. The project, which draws heavily upon the 1997 DoI/DNRE report, *Working Together in Catchment Management - Local Government and CMAs*, aims is to develop a plan with a detailed program of actions and shared commitment to action, as a foundation to form a productive link between different organisations and administrative jurisdictions. The desired outcome is cooperative planning for sustainable use, development and management of natural resource assets in catchments. Within its scope is the charter of responsibilities set out in the Planning and Environment and Local Government Acts, as well as the CALP and Water Acts. Early findings from the project identified eleven common areas of concern following consultation with councils and CMAs:

1. Sustainable regional development – primary and secondary industry issues;
2. Floodplain management;
3. Protection of native biodiversity;
4. Management of irrigation and dryland salinity;
5. Sustainable land management practices;
6. Pest plant and animal control;
7. Waterway management;
8. Rural interface;
9. Landscape change;
10. Greenhouse gases and climate change; and
11. Community involvement in catchment management.

Melva Ryan's research confirmed the interface between local planning schemes and RCSs is poorly developed, and would benefit greatly by having Regional Catchment strategy objectives acknowledged in MSSs and CMAs; and having local councils as significant partners in plan development and implementation. A new agenda for water and sustainability management is emerging, which was handily summarised in a matrix for action document. Melva Ryan recommends the development of significant links between catchment and local plans through regional catchment strategy objectives, local government corporate plans (corporate objectives, programs, and key result areas); shared opportunities for action with priorities and time frames acknowledged in annual works programs. A partnership approach to winning resources through joint funding applications was also highly recommended – one current area crying out for this is shared effort in review of Rural Zones - rightly a regional rather than single local government issue. Other specific opportunities for joint action included:

1. Streamlining controls over land use, development and management across RCM strategies and planning schemes;
2. Streamlining development assessment processes (including information provision and advisory notices);
3. Coordinated work infrastructure programming;
4. Council support for resource management (eg via rate rebate activities);
5. Community engagement processes
6. RCMS water quality and river restoration objectives included in MSSs and LPPFs;
7. Application of planning scheme overlays and wetland and riparian zone recognition;
8. Development of local planning

- policy, standard conditions and local law that supports water quality and river restoration objectives;
9. Preparation of codes of practice and best practice guidelines;
 10. Promotion of stormwater and grey-water best management practices;
 11. Facilitation of local industry involvement in river restoration activities; and
 12. Investigation of alternatives to septic tank installation.

Amongst the array of ideas raised at the seminar lies the fundamental need to the build cooperative working arrangements between CMAs and local government to share effort, skills, data and knowledge. The seminar brought home the basic fact that action is urgently needed to look at the real skill and capability gaps in rural Victoria in terms of planners, environmental health officers and natural resource managers. These gaps set significant limits to local capacities to plan – the will and intent is often there, but the resources and capacity to do more are heavily constrained! The seminar highlighted the need for PIA to finalise its policies on water and sustainable development. Member contributions to these policies are welcomed.

Rosemary Cousin
PIA Board Member

ⁱ In Hobart in February 1994, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to a strategic framework for reform of the water industry which set out to improve water management and to ensure that the extraction of water is sustainable through an efficient and sustainable water industry. In April 1995 the COAG National Competition Policy and Related Reforms Agreement incorporated the Hobart water reform framework and set Commonwealth performance-based tranche payments for States and Territories implementation.

AustraliaWater Partnership

A number of individuals, including the ASL Vice-President, Dr Sabine Schreiber, have been working together to establish an Australian affiliate of the Global Water Partnership (GWP).

The Global Water Partnership, established by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program,

and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency in 1996, aims to promote integrated water resources management (IWRM) through the development of a worldwide network of partnerships, pulling together financial, technical, policy and human resources to address the critical issues of sustainable water management. IWRM is an approach to land and water management that seeks to balance human, industrial, agricultural and environmental needs. To do this successfully, everyone involved in water use - government departments, academics, community groups, agricultural and business interests, NGOs and all other interest groups are advised to join forces to share information, understand data and solve problems.

The AWP provides a neutral forum embracing all 'water' stakeholders to advance IWRM in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The AWP's new web site (www.gwpaustralia.org) is the partnership's primary tool for promoting IWRM.

The web site provides -

- a selection of water case studies on IWRM practices based on the real-life experiences of Australian individuals and organisations;
- links to the GWP ToolBox (a web-based framework of policy guidelines, templates and case studies, designed to provide guidance for the implementation of good water governance);
- important news and events updates; and
- further information about the Australian and Global Water Partnerships.

The AWP is seeking members to join and sustain this organisation. While the AWP has been provided with start-up funds by the Commonwealth Government, it aims to be self-sustaining by 2004. It is therefore hoped that a wide range of organisations and individuals will become members of AWP. Membership of AWP will provide your organisation with an access point to the growing world-wide GWP network and will contribute to its objectives. Organisational and NGO members will also be accorded recognition on the AWP web site. The annual subscription is nominal (\$100 for organisations, \$25 for NGOs, and \$15 for individuals).

For further information contact Rochelle Lawson, Project Officer, AWP.

Phone: +61 2 9495 9913.

New book available soon:

'Ecological Context of Development: New Zealand Perspectives' by Marjorie van Roon and Stephen Knight, Planning Department, University of Auckland

This book is a major work on New Zealand book - largely catchment based - about to be released by Oxford University Press. It contains a majority of NZ case studies plus some from Australia. This book examines the incorporation of catchment based ecological principles into decision-making.

National and international attention on environmental issues places high expectations on professionals involved in managing natural and human resources. In particular, planners, engineers, and lawyers must understand the ecological implications of development decisions to a far greater degree than was once necessary.

As an introduction to the principles of environmental planning, the book takes a pragmatic case-study approach, providing the reader with an understanding of the structure of an ecosystem, and an appreciation of the importance of ecological principles in the planning process. This book brings together disparate information on rural and urban ecosystems in a way not done before.

Written for tertiary students of planning, engineering, resource management, environmental science, and law, as well as for practising professionals and community groups, the book uses case studies to illustrate the benefits of taking into account ecological processes and cycles mostly within a catchment context. It also highlights the problems that arise if these issues are ignored. The authors then relate these examples to international thinking on ecoregional and bioregional planning and ecosystem dynamics.

Further information is available from <http://au.oup.com/searchbuy> and entering the ISBN number 019558435X in the request box:

Marjorie van Roon, Senior Lecturer, Planning Department, University of Auckland

Committee notes from your President

Your Committee meets regularly every six weeks to plan ahead for seminars and conferences but never-the-less things can go pear shaped every so often.

In the case of the upcoming seminar we set the date for it back in August and started planning its content during September. The brochure, speakers were all organised, venue booked all ready to go to the printer.

When suddenly in late September we became aware that the Institute of Planners were also holding a two-day conference on the same major topic as our conference and it was planned for the same day. Both conferences had the Government strategy of 2030 as there bases but there were significant differences on emphasis. So back to the drawing board.

We were faced with the decision; should we carry on, or change our date or change our emphasis slightly? The committee members organising decided that the significant differences in emphasis and price warranted our carrying on, as it also impinged on the inability of changing the date for the venue.

The Planners' conference was strongly biased toward development with input from Dept of Infrastructure, local government, developers, Housing Industry Association, major goods suppliers and landscape parties. Its cost is \$935 per person for the 2 days.

The Society's Seminar was on the effects of 2030 strategy and the natural resources, its green wedge applications, its waterways and urban wastewater treatment. It was planned for one day with plenty of time for discussion and was more focussed on the Society's principal charter aims. Our price was set at \$100 per person with discounts for members and students.

The result is to me a better program more focussed on the environmental effects on the Government's Strategy and not the mechanical housing and social effects, which while important could not be adequately dealt with on one day without cutting down on the discussion time they had built in.

We would like your support for our decision; the emphasis is still on 2030 and remember you could encourage several of your colleagues from your organisation for a lower cost of sending one of them to the planners conference and only one day's time is involved!

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE MURRAY-DARLING BASIN COMMISSION TO RETIRE

Chief Executive of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC), Mr Don Blackmore, has announced his retirement and will stand down from his position in late March next year.

MDBC President Dr Roy Green said Mr Blackmore had made an outstanding contribution to the management of the Murray-Darling Basin for more than 20-years, 14 of which were spent at the helm of the Basin's peak natural resource management agency, the MDBC.

Dr Green said Mr Blackmore's knowledge of water issues is exceptional and recognised, nationally and internationally. His leadership of the MDBC at critical milestones has achieved great results and he is also contributing to many other natural resource management responsibilities.

Currently Deputy Chair of the Co-operative Research Centre for Plant Based Solutions to Dryland Salinity and Chairman of the Research Committee, Mr Blackmore was also a Commissioner on the World Commission for Dams, the organisation with a mandate to review development effectiveness of large dams and criteria for future investment in dams.

Mr Blackmore was also Deputy Chair of the Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation from 1990 to 1999, became a Fellow of the Institute of Engineers Australia in 1995 and a Fellow of the Academy of Engineering and Technological Sciences in 1998.

In May 2000 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science (honoris causa) by La Trobe University. The MDBC has now started a recruitment process for the position in order to ensure continuity of this important role.

Don has been a long time member of the Society and has contributed to many of its conferences and seminars.

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