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MEDIA RELEASE

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Response to proposed Ballarat to Goulburn-Murray water link

Recognition by the State Government that Ballarat's future long-term water supply solution must come from outside the city's present catchment has been welcomed by the Committee for Ballarat.

In a submission to the State Government the Committee said this was an important thrust of the Government's consideration of a link between Ballarat and the Goulburn-Murray system.

While the Committee has not declared its outright support for the project, it has told the Government it welcomes consideration of the initiative, although a range of other options should be considered, including desalination.

The Committee reinforced the urgency of providing an additional long-term water option to Ballarat and stressed it is essential that research into new and additional supplies of water be maintained.

However, it stressed that a short-term solution was required as a matter of urgency and the return of the full supply of the Lal Lal Reservoir to Ballarat was imperative.

The Committee for Ballarat has made a supplementary regional water supply submission to the State Government in the light of the announcement of the Goulburn-Murray link proposal.

In its original submission to the Government, the Committee raised concerns about a proposal in the Draft Sustainable Water Strategy for the Central Region for a link between Ballarat and the Cairn Curran Reservoir.

The supplementary submission asserts that the interconnection of Ballarat with the Goulburn-Murray managed system offered the potential for a much more suitable resolution to the long-term water supply challenge facing Ballarat and region.

The submission also encourages State Government approaches to the Commonwealth for funding to assist with the cost of the infrastructure required to provide any alternative water source to Ballarat.

“Such projects are infrastructure developments of national significance and, while they are designed to assist the economies of particular regions and states, their impact will be felt nationally as they enable communities to remain viable and continue their substantial contribution to the nation’s social and economic wellbeing,” the submission states.

The submission also welcomes the resultant water infrastructure connection the project would provide between major regions of the State and asserts Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo should all be linked..

The Committee told the government that it considered such connections as important as those now in place for the delivery of other utilities such as electricity and gas.

Other water initiatives included in the latest State Government proposal to secure Ballarat’s water future, including commissioning of the interconnection of the Cosgrave Reservoir with the Ballarat supply and the development of recycling options for industry and Lake Wendouree, were supported in the Committee’s supplementary submission.

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