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MEDIA RELEASE

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Water: Thwaites talks fruitful, but still much to be done

Chair of the Committee for Ballarat, Noel Coxall, said today a meeting with Deputy Premier, John Thwaites, to discuss sustainable water options had been fruitful.

“There is still a long way to go and the Government has much to do, but it is pleasing the Government is willing to talk the issues through and consider the points of view of the Committee,” Mr Coxall said.

The meeting with Mr Thwaites - who is also Minister for Water – and his senior advisers, also included the Mayors of Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong and the executive director of the Committee for Geelong.

Mr Coxall said Mr Thwaites had encouraged feedback on the Government’s Draft Sustainable Water Strategy for the Central Region.

“He listened to our feedback there and then and seemed quite prepared to take up at senior government level the points that were made,” Mr Coxall said.

Mr Coxall said the main points at issue with the draft plan were long lead times for the projects proposed and the low population growth assumptions it contained.

He said Mr Thwaites seemed prepared to have these matters looked at and had urged the three regional cities to work together on water solutions.

“He did not discourage the idea of the three cities, along with some of his own senior people, preparing approaches to the Commonwealth Government for financial and other support in solving the water challenge,” Mr Coxall said.

In terms of specific issues in Ballarat, Mr Thwaites asked that a meeting be organised at which he could hear the concerns of the city's four largest industrial water users and they could offer opinions on the draft strategy.

The Committee for Ballarat will facilitate this meeting in the near future.

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