

More water and a prettier city: plan (The Courier, page 3 11th May 2009)

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A PROJECT to capture stormwater from Yarrowee River, while beautifying the city's CBD is the latest proposal from the Committee for Ballarat.

The project could yield up to three gegalitres of water for Ballarat annually, and create a water feature through the central business district.

The idea would see water collected and pumped from Yarrowee River where the city's largest volume of stormwater converges near Eastwood St. This would convert the drain into an attractive water feature.

While keeping water for the environment, the excess would be treated and pumped back to the Gong Gong or Kirks reservoirs.

The committee's water task team believes the project can be done, after Orange City Council in NSW completed a similar project in March.

The Blackmans Swamp Creek Stormwater Harvesting project is the first large scale, direct-to-potable stormwater harvesting project in Australia.

The \$9 million project draws stormwater from the river, providing up to 40 per cent of Orange's total water needs each year.

The Committee for Ballarat's idea has received an enthusiastic response from Ballarat City Council and support from Ballarat MHR Catherine King.

It also wants Central Highlands Water to come on board.

Committee chairman Tony Chew said the project would be subject to approval and discussions with CHW, the State Government, Southern Rural Water and the catchment management authority.

If approved, the committee will make a submission with council under the Federal Government's National Urban Water and Desalination Plan.

The plan provides at least \$200 million for eligible stormwater harvesting and reuse projects.

It will fund half a project's eligible capital costs.

The committee estimates Ballarat's project would cost about \$20 million.

Mr Chew said it was an opportunity to attract funding for a "very worthwhile project".

"This is technologically achievable and has been done elsewhere," Mr Chew said.

"In years to come, the areas where stormwater is cleaned and diverted for capture could become a more attractive area of Ballarat to live."

The scheme is just one element of a series of projects, including a large-scale stormwater harvesting system for Ballarat West.



WATERSMART: Committee for Ballarat chief executive officer Doug Lloyd and chairman Tony Chew. The Committee for Ballarat's latest proposal plans to capture stormwater from Yarrowee River while beautifying the CBD.