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Media Release

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Committee progresses stormwater project

Momentum is building for a project to harvest stormwater for use across Ballarat following representations by the Committee for Ballarat to the State Government at a ministerial and senior departmental level.

The Committee, which initiated the bold project, has held fruitful talks in Melbourne with the Minister for Water, Tim Holding and senior officers of Regional Development Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and the Environment.

Committee chair, Tony Chew, said he was delighted with the positive reception of the minister and departmental officers to the Committee's project and representations.

The Committee has also had a positive response from the Federal Member for Ballarat, Catherine King, to the project which will also require funding commitments from the Commonwealth.

The aim is to secure \$3m from the State while seeking a further \$3m from the Commonwealth to build upon funding already being sought for the initial stage of the project from Canberra by the City of Ballarat.

The City of Ballarat has applied to the Commonwealth for \$2m as part of a plan to allow for the harvesting of a gigitalitre of stormwater around the city.

Mr Chew said that this amount, combined with funding committed by the city council and the potential \$6m being pursued by the Committee, would expand the total project to harvest 3.5 gigitalitres of stormwater – more than 30 per cent of the existing restricted water use in the city – at a cost of more than \$10m.

The harvested water will be used for potable supply or substitution for domestic and commercial use, in addition to the watering of sport and recreational grounds and for firefighting purposes.

Mr Chew said it will also ensure an earlier filling of Lake Wendouree and increase the chance that it will remain consistently full.

“The Committee has carefully designed the plan to clean up stormwater entering waterways and to protect environmental flows,” Mr Chew said.

“We were conscious there was a range of initiatives underway around the city in response to the water shortage crisis. This plan brings them together and builds upon them, with the money already secured or committed, to establish compelling cases to the State and Commonwealth for the additional funding to complete the job.

“We are pleased the City of Ballarat is receptive to the project. Our joint approaches to government are being well received.

“The work the City has done complements the Committee’s initiative. This is the chance to really maximize our water gathering efforts in the interests of sustaining business and industry and enhancing the livability of the city.”

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