

Stormwater harvesting project gets green light

BY KIM STEPHENS

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LAKE Wendouree could have run dry for the last time, after a \$4 million plus stormwater harvesting project for Ballarat was given the green light yesterday.

Ballarat MHR Catherine King announced the city had been chosen as one of 13 sites nationwide to receive a \$2.377 million Federal Government funding injection to capture stormwater and shore up the lake's long depleted supply for use on community parks, sporting fields, school grounds and race tracks.

The Federal funding for the project joins \$650,000 committed by the Victorian Government and \$1.455 million from the City of Ballarat.

"It was a highly competitive process but this will make a big difference to the capacity of council to alleviate watering problems with community groups," she said.

An estimated 189 million litres each year from seven stormwater diversion points across the city is earmarked for use on community facilities, a figure council currently relies on potable water to supply.

City of Ballarat chief executive officer Anthony Schinck described the project as "innovative", saying it had the capacity to divert one gigalitre of water each year to the lake.

He said council was confident the first phase of the project _ the implementation of the Redan Wetland to Lake Wendouree water supply _ would be up and running by April next year to deliver any autumn rainfall to the lake.

However, he said it was not expected be fully operational until 2013.

Committee for Ballarat chief executive officer Doug Lloyd said he believed the detailed proposal put forward to the Federal Government and Ballarat's high water need ensured the city secured the funding in a competitive process.

"Ballarat's need is very high and we will use this as a launch for more extensive collections across the region in the future," he said.

"The harvesting will be very episodic, it will capture the peak of stormwater flows after heavy rain, making sure there are still plenty of environmental flows."

He said while Lake Wendouree was highly likely to run dry again this summer, it could be for the last time.

