

**Submission
No 108**

**INQUIRY INTO ADEQUACY OF WATER STORAGES IN
NSW**

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State Development - nsw water storage submission

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Date: 10/12/2012 10:57 AM
Subject: nsw water storage submission

Thank you for the opportunity of making a short submission to the NSW Legislative Council's Standing Committee on State Developments' current inquiry into the adequacy of water storages in NSW.

I ask the following questions about the cost of developing a large water storage.

What would be the approximate cost to purchase the land required, to compensate land owners, to actually construct a water storage including the labor cost in the construction phase, the on-going labor costs and the costs to treat and distribute the water collected in the storage?

I would argue the total cost would amount to many millions of dollars to construct and operate one large water storage for several decades into the future.

Has any thought been given as to how many rainwater tanks could be manufactured and installed at homes, schools, hospitals, offices and factories for the same amount of taxpayers' funds?

Rainwater tanks are, in effect, mini-water storages that capture rainwater exactly where it falls.

Stored rainwater is now used directly on-site for gardens, outdoor washing uses, toilets and washing machines.

The stored rainwater would be used for non-potable uses only and thus there would be no expensive treatment cost as well as a minimal on-site distribution cost.

Water stored in rainwater tanks have very low rates of evaporation unlike the high evaporation rates in large water storage dams.

In New South Wales 50% of our drinking quality water expensively distributed to our homes is used for garden and other outdoor uses.

My partner and I moved to a new suburban block and new home with a large rainwater tank in December 2011 and we are in the process of establishing two hundred native plants, some exotics and a small vegetable plot. Our three most recent bills for water have averaged \$8.82 per quarter.

A huge uptake of rainwater tanks would result in a large amount of lesser skilled employment in the Australian manufacture and installation of many hundreds of thousands of very durable, minimal maintenance rainwater tanks which are in effect mini-water storages.

This idea if put into practice ticks all the important boxes. The ecological integrity of the river that might otherwise have been dammed remains intact. The employment generated through the manufacture and installation of all the rainwater tanks would add to social cohesion and the employment thus generated would add to our State's economic viability.

Finally two simple aspects of education. One about our present inappropriate use of water is as follows.

We do not know exactly how climate change will affect water distribution in the future.

We do not know what our population will be in future. I only hope the present Federal Labor government and future governments do not continue with the rapid population growth policies of both the Howard and Rudd governments, policies that our States have had to deal with.

Whatever happens there will be an increasing demand for water.

One way to help address this question is to use water more effectively.

We should consider the amount of water embodied in the manufacture of products we choose to both manufacture and choose to use, for water is embodied in the manufacture of every product whether it be a durable, reusable, multi-use product or a convenient single-use disposable item.

Glass, metals and most plastics are very durable materials, materials that are best suited to multi-use products. One example should suffice to explain this. If your children take their lunches to school in durable, washable plastic lunch boxes, all the water embodied in the manufacture of their plastic lunch boxes is locked into the lunch box for the life of the product. However, if your children take

their lunches

in plastic bags, water is embodied in the manufacture of every plastic bag your children use..

A 1% cut in consumption is thought to be equivalent to a 25% rate of recycling and the easiest way to achieve a 1% cut in consumption is to return to using durable materials for products that are multi-use products.

A final point of education is to inform the public that water that flows from a river out to sea is not lost. It is just part of the water cycle that enriches the sea .It returns to the land by way of transpiration from the ocean and falls on the land as rain.Everything is connected to everything else. If we value our children as much as we value ourselves, in this finite world we borrow from our children we must start to do things differently for it not possible to continue with infinite material growth on their finite planet.

All the best with your deliberation in the future you choose for your families.

Yours faithfully

Harry Johnson. (

Former Co-ordinator Kingfisher Recycling Centre..