

Planning and Regulatory.JGaynor.
Reference: StP2017/00156
Phone: 02 4974 2707



12 April 2017

National Water Reform Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
CANBERRA ACT 2601

PO Box 489, Newcastle
NSW 2300 Australia
Phone 02 4974 2000
Facsimile 02 4974 2222
Email mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Email: www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/water-reform

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission on National Water Reform - Issues Paper March 2017

Newcastle City Council appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the National Water Reform Issues Paper.

In relation to urban water, improvements in the efficiency of urban water services are supported. This includes demand management from the household to the community level.

Newcastle City Council will commence in May 2017, the update of our Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which will establish the aspirations and priorities for our community to the year 2030. The issues paper will inform our new document.

Within our current CSP, based on community input from 2009-10 and updated in 2013, efficiency in the use of resources became a specific goal of the document. In relation to water, two specific water related strategies were developed:

- *Maximise water efficiency and recycling through water sensitive urban design, capturing stormwater, encouraging substitution of potable water with alternate supply and improving water usage behaviour.*
- *Implement and showcase leading edge clean technologies in Council's facilities and infrastructure that actively reduce Council's carbon and water footprints.*

Promotion of education and best practise examples are required to further these goals.

To date, our Council has investigated stormwater harvesting with Hunter Water and found that there are opportunities in our LGA. However there are significant costs associated with implementation of this infrastructure. When comparing the costs of alternative water supply to the use of potable supply, the projects are deemed

unviable. Grant programs or incentives to implement alternative water supply would assist in implementing new innovations.

Measures to streamline governance and structural issues and develop shared policy goals across all levels of government may also help drive efficiency improvements. In the case for Newcastle, there is a split in the ownership of drainage assets across the city. Large concrete lined open channels of the major waterways are owned and maintained by Hunter Water and the pits and pipes are owned by Council. Both parties are operating under different legislation and objectives. This legacy complicates urban planning because of the competing priorities in regard to flood mitigation, stormwater management and public amenity.

We would support greater impetus for entities responsible for urban planning and water management to collaborate on water policy. In the example of the Hunter Region, this would see Hunter Water, Council and the Department of Planning and Environment working together to integrate water resource management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the discussion paper.

Yours faithfully

Jill Gaynor
MANAGER STRATEGIC PLANNING