

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

## FACT SHEET 7

## ENVIRONMENT - SECURING WATER RESOURCES

*Nationally, local government seeks a commitment from the Australian Government to work with local government to secure and protect water resources.*

Ensuring a secure supply of good quality water to the community is essential and has far reaching economic, environmental and social consequences. Local government is the provider of reticulated water and wastewater services in Queensland, Tasmania, and much of New South Wales. In all states and the Northern Territory, local government has a direct interest in stormwater management.

Local government also has an interest in water management in urban areas and influences community behaviour through water sensitive urban design, planning and building controls, promotion of recycling, community education and direct support for water saving measures. Local government is already undertaking water projects at the local level, but there needs to be more collaboration between all spheres of government to achieve integrated water outcomes.

Given the drought and heightened awareness of the need for better local water infrastructure and conservation at the community level, ALGA believes that it is timely to establish a discrete local government water supply and water quality program. This initiative would enable councils to augment and renew old leaky systems, treat water and take action to stop nutrient contamination of rivers and water supplies.

Specifically, local level projects that need support are:

- Upgrading and expanding old and/or inadequate water infrastructure, especially where this vital resource is leaking as a result of the deterioration of the infrastructure;
- Storm water harvesting and implementation programs;
- The development of water sensitive urban design principles—a national approach can reduced water use through specific initiatives;
- Encouraging the use of recycling technologies; and
- Water and sewerage services in remote Aboriginal communities.

Local government seeks a commitment to address the impacts on communities that will result from:

- major redistribution of and/or acquisition of water entitlements; and
- significant increases to the cost of water—both commercial and domestic

Structural adjustment packages are needed to assist these communities. Local government will need to be a partner in the assessment of community impacts and the development of compensation packages.