

Board Meeting Overview: April 2009

Here is the news from the April 17 board meeting:

- **Water use down, supply looking secure**
- **Performing well in state-wide comparisons**
- **Studying ways to curb chlorine taste**
- **More storage, Class A recycled water and 24 hr service: our wish-list**
- **Fluoridation plan announced**

Water use down, supply looking secure

Modelling at the end of March shows there is enough water in Candowie Reservoir to supply until September 2009

- without any further rain
- without extra supply from the Bass River or the Corinella bore and
- without changes to current use levels

An application to pump excess water during high flows from the Bass River from 1 May 2009 is awaiting Ministerial approval.

Current daily use of 5.5 ML/day compares well with the 5.7ML/day used at the same time last year.

Of 343 towns in Victoria, 170 are on permanent water-saving measures.

The Corinella bores are currently adding 2ML/day, and the Board resolved to retain permanent water-saving measures.

Performing well in state-wide comparisons

Two recent reports¹ contained the following facts:

- Westernport Water's average water bill was \$718 compared with our nearest neighbour, South Gippsland Water, which was \$740.
- Water usage for Westernport Water was Victoria's lowest at 71 kilolitres (KL)/household, compared with the state's average of 176KL/household. This reflects the fact that 59% of our customers are non-permanent residents.
- The predominance of non-resident customers partly explained the state-highest number of restrictors applied for account non-payment (1.13/100 customers).
- Unplanned interruptions to water supply was about average for utilities of our size.
- Complaints received for water or sewerage averaged 17 per 1000 properties, comparable with our neighbours. Improved inflows and works to improve water quality should limit the number and severity of complaints.
- Westernport Water was Victoria's best for sewerage blockages – only 6.8/100km compared with the state average of 31.5.

Studying ways to curb chlorine taste

New trials will reduce chlorine levels using a well-tested technique called chloramination. The method uses a small amount of ammonia prior to chlorine, and is very useful in situations similar to that of Westernport Water where there are:

- long lengths of pipe
- low-flow periods
- challenges controlling the residual chlorine level at the ends of the system.

¹ The Essential Services Commission annual review of Performance of Urban Water & Sewerage Businesses and Department of Human Services for 2007/08 review

The Water Quality Officer will test the water daily during the trial.

More storage, Class A recycled water and 24 hr service: our wish-list

Westernport Water's Corporate Plan for 2009/10 was tabled. It covers:

- Continuing investigations into the most cost-effective way of increasing Candowie Reservoir's storage capacity
- Completing testing and approval of the Corinella borefield
- Continuation of the inclining block tariff, which benefits consumers experiencing high seasonal demand
- Capital expenditure for 2009/10 will be similar to the current year at \$4m
- Producing and supplying Class A recycled water to residential properties and sporting venues
- Introducing 24 hr auto-payment via the internet and telephone to improve customer convenience.

Fluoridation plan announced

The Department of Human Services had distributed booklets to all Westernport Water customers on its fluoridation project and conducted public meetings during April. Fluoridation of Westernport Water's drinking water is planned to be operational by December 2009.