



## What's on

### Wednesday June 10, 12.30pm

Death of Democracy Rally, Parliament Steps. Join campaigns against changes to the planning laws, Blue and Green Wedges and public transport advocates. Presentation of postcards and no-desal campaigning letters to National Party leader Peter Ryan. For bus bookings/ car pooling leaving from Wonthaggi at 9.30 am, ring Stella on 5672 2991

### Saturday, June 13, 1pm

Climate Emergency Rally at the State Library, Melbourne. Organised by community climate action groups, including Watershed. Details: 9639 3660, www.climateally.org

### Saturday, June 20

Death of Democracy march through Wonthaggi town centre, marking two years since the announcement of the desalination plant project. Meet at 11 am on the Inverloch Rd in Wonthaggi near the Cottage restaurant. March around Wonthaggi town centre and finish at Apex Park with a wake and BBQ. Details: 0407 811 778 or 0407 307 231.

### Late June

Letterboxing in marginal seats. Details: Neil Rankine neilnola@netspace.net.au

### Friday, July 10, 10am

The last van eviction arrestee, Jeannie Zigon, has a court appearance at Wonthaggi Court. Of special interest as issues of Aboriginal heritage on the site will be raised. Bring your friends and support Jeannie and the cause.

[www.watershedvictoria.org.au/events](http://www.watershedvictoria.org.au/events)

## They said it

"Stormwater is a new source of water that has been underutilised to date. Stormwater harvesting systems can function with very low energy use and provide relatively low-cost water."

**John Thwaites, former Victorian water minister, now chair of Monash University's Sustainability Institute, reported in June 2009,**

"If Australia serves as a harbinger of things to come for the rest of the world, its political response shows how difficult it will be to solve the problem [of climate change]. Progress is being made but it's achingly slow ... Soon you may not have to travel to the outback to see a desolate wasteland; it may be coming to your neighbourhood."

**Fewer g'days ahead, Los Angeles Times editorial, April 11, 2009**



## Listen here!

Watershed's Maggie Camilleri gave the lowdown on the two French companies tendering for the desalination contract when opponents of the project gathered at Williamsons Beach last month. About 200 people turned out to hear speakers from Watershed, Friends of the Earth and the Clean Ocean Foundation. There was also plenty of interest from the local police force and security guards.

## Report backs Watershed

A STATE parliamentary inquiry into Melbourne's future water supply has recommended many of the measures Watershed and its predecessor Your Water Your Say have been recommending as an alternative to desalination.

The Labor-dominated Environment and Natural Resources Committee, chaired by former Bracks Government minister John Pandazopoulos, presented its recommendations to Parliament in early June after an 18-month inquiry.

The committee noted that many of the submissions it received criticised the decision to construct the Wonthaggi desalination plant, but said its terms of reference did not allow it to consider the merits or otherwise of the project.

The committee did recommend that the contract for the desalination plant be designed water production to be varied, so as not to provide disincentives for water conservation and the development of other water supplies, including recycling.

It also said the Government should aim to reuse 50 per cent of Melbourne's waste water by 2012, and 70 per cent by 2015. Melbourne recycles more than any Australian city, but still pumps most of its treated water out to sea at controversial outfalls such as Gunnamatta.

### Recommendations:

- \* Recycle 50 per cent of waste water by 2012 and 70 per cent by 2015.
- \* Set more ambitious water conservation and efficiency targets.
- \* Promote water conservation to avoid large increases in household water consumption that traditionally accompany the delivery of new supplies of water.
- \* Make efficient showerheads and dual-flush toilets mandatory for houses when sold or leased.
- \* Introduce an environmental sustainability rating system for buildings when sold or leased.
- \* Change the pricing of water to a higher proportion of the bill for consumption and a lower proportion for fixed charges to promote conservation.
- \* Urgently complete an urban stormwater strategy (originally due in 2007), clarifying stormwater property rights and promoting the use of stormwater.
- \* Amend planning provisions and building regulations to promote stormwater harvesting in Melbourne.
- \* Encourage the installation and use of rainwater tanks.
- \* Mandate dual pipe systems, or other water saving measures, in new residential and industrial developments.

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## It's in the box

WATERSHED is planning another letterbox drop in a marginal Melbourne electorate. This time it's Mt Waverley, where Maxine Morand, the Minister for Women's Affairs and Children and Early Childhood, is looking very vulnerable.

In the 2006 election, Ms Morand beat the Liberal candidate by just 205 votes after preferences. Given that there were 2657 Green voters, many of whom will not be happy about the power-guzzling desalination plan, the seat isn't looking too safe for Ms Morand.

The letterboxing will be carried out in the last two weeks of June with a final push on Saturday, June 27. If you'd like to be involved, send your contact details to Neil on [neilnola@netspace.net.au](mailto:neilnola@netspace.net.au).

## Report backs Watershed

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Former Your Water Your Say president Andrea Bolch said the general thrust of the report supported all the alternatives Watershed and Your Water Your Say had argued for since the desalination plant was announced in June 2007.

"It's unfortunate, however, that the inquiry (dominated by four Labor MPs) did not even consider reviewing whether or not the desalination plant and the north/south pipeline were the most appropriate solutions for Melbourne."

Watershed vice-president Neil Rankine said the report predictably went along party lines and side-stepped the issue of the desalination plant. "If the Government bit the bullet and actually did some of these things recommended in the report right now, there would be no need to build the desalination plant," he said.

**Full report:** [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc/inquiries/Water/report](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc/inquiries/Water/report)

## A 'Premier Miracle' at Desal Beach...



## Thwaites sees the light

FORMER Victorian Deputy Premier John Thwaites – who was water minister when the State Government announced the desalination plant two years ago – now says Melbourne should be harvesting stormwater.

*The Age Online* reported on June 3 that Mr Thwaites, now chairman of Monash University's Sustainability Institute, has implied that the Government may have got it wrong.

In a Victorian government green paper on climate change this month, Mr Thwaites says stormwater is a cheap, green water source that has been underutilised.

Mr Thwaites and then premier Steve

Bracks mysteriously quit politics less than a month after they had announced the desalination plant, Victoria's biggest ever infrastructure project.

Now Mr Thwaites may be having second thoughts.

"Stormwater is a new source of water that has been underutilised to date," he wrote in the green paper.

"Stormwater harvesting systems can function with very low energy use and provide relatively low-cost water."

Unlike the desalination, which will cost more than \$3 billion and use more than 90 megawatts of power a year.

## Watershed Victoria

Watershed Victoria is a community group that seeks alternatives to the Government's water plan, which requires on a north-south pipeline and a desalination plant as "silver-bullet solutions". It replaces the Your Water Your Say community group, which was forced to cease operating last year. Together with Plug the Pipe and the Clean Oceans Foundation, Watershed Victoria forms the Victorian Water Forum, which is campaigning for sustainable water solutions for Victoria.



watershedvictoria

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## Membership

Name .....

Email ..... Phone ..... Mobile .....

Address .....

Cost, \$15 individuals, \$30 households. Amount paid: ..... Receipt required? .....

Please indicate if you would like to help in the campaign, eg. distribution, publicity, fund-raising, manning caravan

Give membership form and subscription to a committee member; OR

Post form plus cheque or postal order to Watershed Victoria, Dalyston PO, 3992; OR

Direct deposit to Bendigo Bank. Account name: Watershed Victoria. BSB: 633 000. Acc No: 134 991 850. Reference: Your name