

MEDIA RELEASE

27 October 2008

**NEW PEAK WATER GROUP FORMED WITH MESSAGE TO THE
BRUMBY GOVERNMENT - SUSPEND DESAL PLANT AND PIPELINE**

The Brumby Government must suspend plans to construct the desalination plant and north-south pipeline and instead fast-track the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into water.

This is a clear message today as three key Victorian community water groups – Clean Ocean Foundation, Watershed Victoria and Plug the Pipe - unite to form the Victorian Water Forum (VWF).

According to the VWF, there are compelling reasons to review the Victorian water strategy. These include

- the current environmental inquiry into the Wonthaggi desalination plant has revealed massive gaps in environmental impact studies that must be addressed before any commitment can be provided
- critically low water levels in Northern Victoria raise serious concerns about any efforts to transfer water from the Murray Basin to Melbourne
- a range of far more efficient and effective water strategies for Melbourne with far less economic, environmental and social impacts for Victoria than the proposed desalination plant.

The VWF also expressed concern that the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into water is only now being held and has deferred its deadline for the inquiry. The VWF believes that the inquiry should be given the highest priority before questionable and irreversible decisions affecting all Victorians for decades are made.

The VWF has compiled a detailed overview of its position and is now seeking an urgent hearing before the Parliamentary inquiry to explain this position.

MEDIA PLEASE NOTE:

VWF position statement is attached for your information.

THE VWF WILL AT 2.00PM TODAY HOLD A MEDIA CONFERENCE AT THE STEPS OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

For further information please contact Anton Vigenser, COF 0412318146; Stephen Cannon, WV 0407811778; Mike Dalmau PtP, 0417588455

VWF – comprising Clean Ocean, Watershed Victoria and Plug the Pipe