



Anthony Byrne MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HOLT

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



17 April 2009

Essential Services Commission
Level 2
35 Spring Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: South East Water- service charges for Class A recycled water

I write to you concerning South East Water having sought 95 percent increase in the tariff for Class A recycled water over the next four years per the Metropolitan Water Price Review, as reported in the *Cranbourne Leader* of 15 April. It is my belief- one which is shared by a number of my affected constituents- that such a large price increase will have the effect of discouraging further uptake of recycled water services.

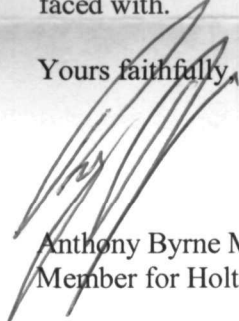
I refer you to Leader journalist Dimity Barber's report in the Leader of 15 April, where South East Water spokesperson Caroline Page was quoted as justifying the cost increase by saying:

“...it needed to increase prices to pay for the infrastructure needed to service a growing population.”

I am concerned that, amidst the onset of the global financial crisis, which is hitting families in my area hard, a provider of an essential service would seek to penalise residents doing the right thing in trying to lessen their burden on the system by using recycled water. This price hike will in fact discourage people from using recycled water, and burden local infrastructure further, creating the precise justification for which South East Water maintains they need this substantial cost increase to provide for.

I believe that all Victorians, particularly those in the Casey-Cardinia growth corridor which has seen and continues to see significant population growth, should be entitled to use recycled water if they wish, and that this fee increase discourages such practices. I further submit that any substantial price increase- not least one of 95% over the coming years- is an unfair burden to impose at this time, as many families are tightening their belts as a result of the difficult economic circumstances we are now faced with.

Yours faithfully,


Anthony Byrne MP
Member for Holt