



MEDIA RELEASE

Water restrictions not the answer

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The Australian Water Association (AWA) is calling for the community to continue their water-saving practices, even if water restrictions are lifted this spring.

On Thursday, Victorian Minister for Water, Peter Walsh said that it is expected that water restrictions will be lifted due to Melbourne dam water levels being at a ten-year high.

AWA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tom Mollenkopf, is concerned that the lifting of water restrictions may cause consumers to be less vigilant in reducing their water use.

“There is a difference between being careful with water and restricting its use.

“Water restrictions are a blunt instrument and they are costly; they should be lifted when they’re not needed, but we must still encourage consumers to be water wise”, said Mr Mollenkopf.

Mr Mollenkopf went on to say that while water restrictions are important in emergency situations, they have negative impacts on the economy, the public and individuals.

“At their most obvious, water restrictions have resulted in us being unable to use many sports fields, the loss of parks and gardens which have a material impact on our community’s health, amenity and enjoyment. Less obvious is the economic cost through lost production particularly in the horticulture and nursery industries. The opportunity to come out of restrictions is therefore a cause for some celebration”

But even if we lift water restrictions, it is vital that we continue to use water prudently, Mr Mollenkopf said.

It is encouraging to see the Victorian Government continuing to invest in the long term reduction of water consumption through advisory campaigns.

“Maintaining a water saving ethos in the Australian community is vital, if we are going to be protected against shortages when dry times return, as they inevitably will.

“It is important to recognise that it is the variability and volatility of rainfall in Australia, rather than a general lack of water that causes our water problems. It is times like now, when the dam levels are up, that we should look at the long term by continuing to encourage sound water practices and investment in diverse sources of water – whether these be recycling, desalination inter-basin transfers or demand management”, Mr Mollenkopf concluded.



Notes to editors:

- Australian Water Association (AWA) Chief Executive, Mr Tom Mollenkopf, is available for interviews.
- AWA is Australia's leading water sector body, representing over 10,000 water professionals around the country and across all water disciplines.
- AWA provides leadership in the water sector on a wide range of issues, including skills shortages, climate change and water reuse and recycling.
- AWA works to enhance the skills and knowledge of water professionals and promote and disseminate best practice through an extensive range of technical seminars, courses and events.