

AUSTRALIAN[®] WATER

ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Water Association and Minter Ellison release discussion paper on promoting investment in the water sector

26 May 2015

The Australian Water Association (AWA) has released a Discussion Paper, prepared by Minter Ellison, which highlights the current regulatory barriers to greater private sector participation in the Australian water sector.

Australian Water Association Chief Executive, Jonathan McKeown, said that given the challenging fiscal environment for governments in the short to medium term, it is the opportune time for governments to consider whether additional private investment into the water sector could assist in making public investment more readily available in other areas.

“Funding issues are only going to become more severe in coming years when the competition for the available capital from governments will increase amongst service providers such as health and education.

“However, for effective private investment in the water industry, clear and strong policy and regulatory settings are required to maximise customer benefits and community expectations from additional private sector involvement.

“The *Promoting Investment in the Water Sector* Discussion Paper shows there is a desperate need for consistency of economic regulation across all states and territories to attract long-term private investment”, said Mr McKeown.

Minter Ellison Partner and Author, Katrina Groshinski, said one of the key recommendations of the Report is that governments should agree on the broad objective of water sector regulatory frameworks.

“Most jurisdictions now have discrete public health, environmental and economic regulatory frameworks that can readily be used to govern activities by a range of participants. However, in many parts of the sector, there is not complete institutional separation of service providers from the regulatory and policy functions of the governments. This can create barriers to the promotion of customer choice, innovation, efficiency and private sector investment”, said Ms Groshinski.

The Report is available for download at www.awa.asn.au/discussion_papers

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About AWA

The Australian Water Association (AWA) is the national peak water organisation, delivering information, expertise and collaboration for sustainable water management. We provide a platform for our water experts, practitioners and businesses to share information, grow expertise and collaborate effectively. Our members include professionals and practitioners working in utilities, science and research, energy and resources, manufacturing and agriculture.

About Minter Ellison

Minter Ellison has one of the largest energy and resources legal practices in Australia, with more than 30 partners working almost exclusively with clients in the energy and resources sector across Australia and the emerging economies of Asia. Since the beginning of 2014, Minter Ellison has been the number one legal services provider on deals in the energy and natural resources sector, advising on A\$8.94bn of transactions (MergerMarket as at 11 May 2015). In the water sector, Minter Ellison has advised on more than 80 major water projects in Australia and Asia across the agricultural, mining, petroleum and urban development sectors, for clients including governments and government owned entities, private sector project proponents and financiers. Our team has also advised governments on major water reform initiatives.

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