



25 May 2011

By email: urbanwater@pc.gov.au

Wendy Craik
Presiding Commissioner
Inquiry into Australia's Urban Water Sector
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins Street East,
Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Ms Craik

Re: Draft Report - Australia's Urban Water Sector

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to the *Draft Report - Australia's Urban Water Sector*.

Consumer Action is unable to provide written comment on the Draft report however, due to the significant number of jurisdictional and federal regulatory and policy processes we are presently engaged with. In lieu of our own submission, we provide our endorsement of the submission by the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre.

We do however believe that the issues surrounding urban water are significant and wish to highlight that it is imperative that the Commission ensure social equity considerations form the basis of any future work, for these will guide its approach to urban water sector development, including discussions around the issue of affordability, classification of essential water use and consumer protections.

We remain deeply concerned that there is very little opportunity for meaningful engagement in the water sector by consumers due to a significant lack of resourcing, which puts at risk the representation of consumer interests on a range of complex issues. There is an urgent need for increased financial and structural support for consumer advocacy organisations to engage effectively in urban water policy development.

We thank the Commission again for this opportunity.

Yours sincerely

CONSUMER ACTION LAW CENTRE

Janine Rayner
Senior Policy Officer - Energy and Water