

Minister's Foreword



As we enter 2004, we can look back on the International Year of Freshwater as a year that Victoria continued to play a significant part in recognising both the importance of our water resources and the common challenge all nations share in managing water sustainably.

With the release of the discussion document, 'Securing our Water Future – Green Paper for Discussion', the Victorian Government undertook extensive consultation with communities across the State in late 2003 on the sustainable management of water resources in Victoria. The Government's final policy will be announced in a White Paper in early 2004.

Clearly the success of this new approach will depend on the commitment from all Victorians to achieve sustainable water use. At the forefront in achieving this commitment is educational programs

like the Victorian Waterwatch program. The program's approach of engaging individuals and communities to get involved in natural resource management processes is imperative to bring about community-based innovative solutions to the sustainable management of our water resources.

It is clear that the key to achieving sustainable water management is shared responsibility and a true partnership approach between government, industry and the community. Waterwatch Victoria's strong partnership approach, links local community groups and schools with a host of water related partners, including urban and rural water authorities, local governments, state government agencies and catchment management authorities.

Waterwatch Victoria's 2003 yearbook and its enclosed case studies are a

testimonial to the ability of community to be a valuable partner with government agencies and private enterprise to achieve excellent natural resource management outcomes.

Finally, it's with great pleasure that I congratulate members of the Victorian community that tirelessly volunteer their time and efforts to river health activities. Your contribution to Securing Victoria's Water Future is helping to shape a sustainable future for all generations.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'John Thwaites'.

Honourable John Thwaites, MP
Minister for Environment and Water