**GWMWater**

**17 March 2015**

Richard Bales

Senior Development Officer

Grampians Regional Development Victoria

62 Darlot Street

Horsham VIC 3400

Dear Mr Bales

Review of DEDJTR's Regional Service Delivery Model and Strategic Directions Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the policy opportunities and service delivery models to assist in the development new and enhanced regional and rural development initiatives.

A key initiative is to ensure that there is an enabling framework for investors, developers and entrepreneurs to better understand a regions capability to support any proposed new developments. GWMWater presently supports this process by having strong strategic relationships with Regional Development Victoria (RDV). In our region this is further supported by affiliation with economic development arms of local government with the most significant relationship being the Wimmera Development Association (WDA).

Over 25 years ago it was recognised that the key constraint to development in the region was the inadequacy of the water supply from both a water quality and quantity perspective. We have since converted the inefficient open channel network of the Wimmera Mallee into a rural pipeline system with the completion of the Northern Mallee and Wimmera Mallee pipeline. In doing so, water has been returned to the environment and water savings converted to water that can be used to support new developments in the region. Water quality has also been upgraded to meet the requirements of the Drinking Water Regulations of the Safe Drinking Water Act in all our large and medium sized towns. This provides significant opportunities for the region to leverage this investment by industries involved in food production and food processing.

The industries identified by the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Interim Business Case included; intensive agriculture, mining, viticulture and 'niche' horticulture. The business case also identified opportunities for enhanced ecotourism arising from the improved environmental outcomes. GWMWater has since developed a Growth Water Marketing Strategy to provide a bit more focus to the programs that are seeking to utilise growth water and a copy of the strategy is attached. A key in this strategy was the role RDV, WDA and other economic development arms of local government play in facilitating new developments.

GWMWater is yet to technically complete the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project as it is presently undertaking projects consistent with the pipeline objectives that will fulfil the GWMWater financial commitment to the pipeline. One such project is the Rural Pipeline Intelligence Project (RPIP) that is presently being delivered. This project involves the construction of a low end telemetry network that will allow for 'real time' meter data to be received by GWMWater that can then be shared back to the customer. Whilst this network is being built for meter reading, it can be used for other rural and regional applications that require regular transmission of data to a central point.

GWMWater is planning to undertake a Gate 6 (benefits evaluation) review of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project. It is anticipated that this will reaffirm and/ or reassess the opportunities that the Wimmera Mallee pipeline presents to the region.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

Managing Director