



THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

MC24-009496

Mr John Gemmill
Chief Executive Officer
Clean Ocean Foundation
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Dear Mr Gemmill

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 April 2024, cosigned by many scientists and environmentalists, about national support for water recycling and purified recycled water (PRW) in particular.

I acknowledge the importance of diversifying urban water supplies to meet water security needs and to ensure sustainability for our rapidly growing cities and regional centres in the face of climate change. This aligns with the Australian Government's goals of climate resilience and addressing the need for safe and secure water.

While state and territory governments and local councils are responsible for urban water management and related matters such as PRW, the Australian Government is committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to enhance water security and sustainability for all Australians. I agree that given that we live in the driest inhabited continent on Earth, we could and should be a global leader in the area of recycled water.

The government is providing national leadership on sustainable management of our water supplies through the renewal of the National Water Initiative (NWI). Improving water security for everyone is a focus of this work. This presents an opportunity to consider increased use of alternative water supplies such as PRW. These initiatives could be suited for inclusion in actions plans which will be developed by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments as part of the implementation of the new agreement. As part of the renewal, the government has and will continue to consult stakeholders on what should be included.

As you may be aware, Sydney Water operates a purified recycled water facility at Quakers Hill.

The government is also investing in national water infrastructure projects through the National Water Grid Fund. The Fund allows all types of water infrastructure projects to come forward, including water recycling, and other circular economy solutions from both a water perspective and a waste perspective. The fund invests in water efficiency and recycling projects to increase resilience to climate change by supplementing water supplies, particularly for agriculture, industrial use and community green spaces.

A previously funded project, which may be of interest to you, identified potential locations and opportunities to reuse wastewater for agriculture (www.nationalwatergrid.gov.au/projects/national-review-wastewater-reuse-opportunities-agriculture).

The National Water Grid Science Program provides a national research hub that underpins water infrastructure investment decisions on where and how we build sustainable water infrastructure for a water-secure future. The program supports research into water recycling as well as investment in essential infrastructure and scientific solutions.

I spoke on this topic of water recycling and a range of other water-related issues at the Ozwater Conference in Melbourne on 2 May 2024. The transcript is available online (<https://minister.dcceew.gov.au/plibersek/speeches/speech-ozwater-conference>).

I hope these programs encourage you that the government will consider all options for scientifically sound water management. I look forward to your continuing contribution to managing our water resources sustainably.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely



TANYA PLIBERSEK

26.6.24