

Cheltenham Park Residents Group
Submission to the
Australian Government National Water Initiative
Our Goal: The Use of Cheltenham Park Racecourse for Flood Mitigation and Storm
Water Harvesting and Reuse.
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INTRODUCTION

Drought and its consequences are currently taxing the minds of decision makers in the three fields of Government, - Federal, State and Local.

It is well known that drought has two consequences. The first is the immediate shortage of water and the need for allocation of existing water supplies. The second consequence arises from the axiom “droughts are followed by floods”. This submission, although recognizing the priority for the “big picture items”, relates to the local issue for the Lower Torrens River Catchment area and Adelaide’s western plains.

We know that the annual usage from the reticulated water system for the Lower River Torrens Catchment area is 49,000ML. We know that the annual storm water runoff into Gulf St. Vincent for this region is 42,000ML. This situation and the damage done to the marine environment have been known by our civic leaders for decades. We have a history of creating various water management Authorities and a host of reports have been published.

Despite this we have made essentially no progress in harnessing natural rainfall and mitigating storm flood events to achieve environmental and economic benefits in this region. One Council CEO is reported as saying “We have seen enough reports on what needs to be done-it’s now a matter of getting something done” (Sunday Mail Feb 11, 2007)

STORM WATER

Torrens River Catchments

The major runoff of storm water into Gulf St. Vincent is from the River Torrens. The River Torrens rises in the creeks of the Mt Lofty Range foothills, flows across the Western plains and discharges from man-made outlets into the sea. The most recent evaluation of the problems of this system by experts attending a symposium, clearly show that decades of work will be required before improvement in this drainage system can be realized. The problems with flood mitigation particularly in the lower regions of the catchment are now being partially addressed.

Torrens Road/Port Road Major Drains.

These two major storm water drains service the Torrens Road and Port Road catchment areas. The volumes of storm water handled by these systems are small compared to the Torrens River system. However it is this attribute that provides for immediate solutions and is the focus of this submission viz. the use of Cheltenham Park Racecourse land for flood mitigation and storm water harvesting and reuse.

Cheltenham Park Racecourse Land.

Wetland Harvesting.

This land (46ha) currently owned by the SA Jockey Club is no longer required by the Club for horse racing. The land has the Torrens Road and Port Road drains passing on the northeast and southwest boundaries of the Cheltenham Park Racecourse

respectively. Both drains are major storm water drains and as such, present large volumes of storm water available for wetland diversion and cleansing, subsequent aquifer recharge and eventual reuse.

The community after the recent public consultation conducted by the Land Management Corporation on behalf of the State Government knows of no engineering impediment to the implementation of such a scheme. The Charles Sturt Council has passed a motion to compulsorily acquire the Cheltenham Park Racecourse land for flood mitigation and aquifer storage and reuse of storm water. This followed on from one outcome of a public meeting attended by more than 900 people to consider the future use of the Cheltenham Park Racecourse. The property value set by the SA Government Valuer General for Council rates is currently \$6.8M .

FLOOD MITIGATION

We are all aware of the devastation and economic cost to households of a major flood event. Local Councils now recognize their responsibility in preventing major flood events from devastating the many properties that over time have been approved for construction in what have previously been flood prone areas.

In the Charles Sturt Council area the City of Charles Sturt has advised all residents of the consequences of the local storm water drainage system not being capable of safeguarding their properties in the course of severe storm flooding events.

Coupled with this known risk is the fact that the only substantial parcel of land available for flood mitigation works for the Port and Torrens Road drainage systems is the Cheltenham Park Racecourse land.

The establishment of raised earth flood mitigation ponds on Cheltenham Park Racecourse land would give both drainage systems the capability of coping with twice the precipitation from storm flood events.

CONCLUSION

This submission outlines a project for National Water Initiative consideration.

It relates to a response to a local storm water related initiative.

Although relatively small when compared to the whole of Adelaide Water Proofing Strategy, it is capable of demonstrating efficiency in time of resolution of an existing problem, coupled with immediacy of economic benefit from water harvesting and aquifer storage and reuse of storm water.

The local community is well aware of the benefits that this proposal would provide.

The community has embraced the notion of zero waste of storm water. The implementation of this proposed initiative would be a major environmental benefit: would be a visible demonstration of a response to the serious challenge of mitigating storm events and harvesting scarce water. This initiative would receive support by residents in the North West Adelaide Region.

The Cheltenham Park Residents Group welcomes your consideration of this submission. Robert Beatton, Chairman.