Position

Water catchment authorities have powers and duties which overlap and interact with the preparation of Regional Plans and with existing and new Local Environmental Plans. The working relationships between these documents is very obscure. It is crucial that the regional plans have input on catchment management but equally important that water catchment plans take account of social, economic and political realities.

It is also proposed the Catchment Authorities become consent authorities for vegetation management plans and approvals to clear native vegetation. Whilst there may be some benefit in having a local agency at arms length from elected local government in making these decisions, it is vital that there is a good information flow between the two – for example, decisions should be recorded of Council’s register of decisions and policies recorded on Section 149 Certificates.

Policies

1. the preparation of water catchment management plans, particularly at the local level, be as closely aligned with regional plans as possible, with significant overlap of membership of the policy makers;

2. timeframes are set out, and resources provided, which ensure that plans for each region/catchment are prepared concurrently and not sequentially;

3. overarching policies for all plans are clearly articulated at a State level;

4. the administrative responsibilities of the Water Catchment Authorities be closely integrated with those of the constituent local authorities.