

Growing pains – the Western Water story

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Less than 20 years ago, Western Water supplied several outer suburban and small towns through a combination of conventional surface and groundwater sources. The millennium drought placed significant strain on supplies, requiring bulk supply from Melbourne Water, development of recycled water plants and investment in an interconnected potable water transfer network.

Melbourne is experiencing a period of sustained growth as the city expands to the north and west. Outer suburban areas in the Western Water service region, such as Melton and Sunbury, will see their populations increase placing a huge demand on infrastructure. Western Water has recognised and responded to the need for a fundamentally different approach to integrated water management for its service region.

Western Water's Urban Water Strategy, Integrated Water Management Strategy and Water Master Plans are significant pieces of work, reflective of a proactive and integrated approach to water management across the state of Victoria. The active participation of key stakeholders such as Melbourne Water and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, in these workstreams reflects a collaborative approach—essential to tackling the combined challenges of population growth and climate change and realising the vision for water management articulated in the State Government's strategic plan *Water for Victoria*.

This paper details the approach to building a resilient water supply. It demonstrates that if you set a clear vision, and obtain stakeholder and community buy-in, you can plan effectively.