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MEDIA RELEASE

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Parliamentary inquiry into Labor's water projects

Geelong residents get to have their say on the Melbourne-Geelong pipeline

Geelong residents have less than a month to make a submission to a Parliamentary Inquiry into the benefits and costs of the Brumby Government's major water projects.

The Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition, with the support of minor parties, successfully fought members of the Brumby Government in the Upper House to establish the inquiry earlier this month.

Western Victoria MP David Koch said the inquiry would investigate many unresolved issues.

"The inquiry will focus on the estimated benefits and costs arising from the Brumby Government's major water infrastructure projects, including the desalination plant at Wonthaggi and the north south pipeline – expensive projects that will significantly increase the cost of Geelong's water.

"The Brumby Government broke its promise to investigate groundwater options for Geelong, and will instead make water users pay to build a pipeline from Wonthaggi on one side of the state to Geelong on the other, a strategy that ignores the natural resources of the Otways and the advantages of water recycling at Black Rock.

"This government has had nine years and Victoria still has a water crisis.

"The Brumby Government is taking the Geelong community for granted and imposing the Melbourne inter-connector to satisfy its own need to fund very expensive desalinated water for Melbourne.

"Geelong residents are being made to believe they are in a greater plight than they are just to satisfy Labor's need to fund its costly desalination agenda.

"Since 1999, Labor has taken \$2.8 billion in taxes, levies and dividend payments from Victorian water companies, yet the government's failure to plan for water security has already led to increased household water bills to pay for its mismanagement – something Geelong's Labor MPs Ian Trezise, Michael Crutchfield, Lisa Neville and John Eren should be truly ashamed of," David Koch said.

The inquiry will gather evidence from across the state and is an opportunity for landowners, farmers, businesses and consumers to have their say in open and transparent hearings.

The committee conducting the hearings will take evidence from the public and a range of experts, and will have the authority to question members of Parliament, ministers and departmental staff.

Hearings are expected to begin early next year.

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