

## ARTIFICIAL WATER FEATURES IN PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTS

- At the March 2007 meeting of the Minister's State/Local Government Forum, an update was provided on work in progress in relation to the issue of artificial water features in public environments and public safety risks, particularly for children.
- This followed concerns raised by Minister Rankine and a subsequent letter from the Minister for Urban Development and Planning to all councils in relation to the child safety risks of man-made stormwater retention/detention ponds and channels.
- Minister Holloway advised that further work would be undertaken to consider options for development of Guidelines or an Australian Standard, which could assist councils when approving plans for such stormwater infrastructure.
- Planning SA has coordinated the production of a document for consultation and to that end has been working with the Injuries Surveillance Branch in the Department of Health and the Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme. This work involved studies of a number of public artificial water features in South Australia, including stormwater management systems, wetland developments and water features in housing developments, and visits and discussions with a number of councils.
- A working draft has now been produced and the document is at a stage where broader consultation is desirable, particularly with councils, to identify any changes that are necessary for the final document.
- A copy of the draft document is attached. It provides a technical overview of issues associated with good practice, and identifies attributes of safety, with a draft checklist for calculating safety. The document concludes with a section setting out simplified approach to safety around artificial water features, providing a list of conditions which could be required to be met during and after construction, or as the result of a review.
- It is proposed that a process of consultation on the draft guidelines document be undertaken as soon as practicable. The LGA has agreed to coordinate consultation with councils.
- A summary of feedback and a recommended final document will then be prepared for consideration by Ministers Holloway and Rankine.
- It is noted that following the two incidents along the Torrens River highlighting issues of child safety around watercourses, a safety audit along the river is currently being undertaken. The outcomes of that audit may produce information that could be incorporated into a final document.
- Once the document has been finalised, it is proposed to seek the support of other States and Territories in an approach to Standards Australia for a national standard on the issue, based on the South Australian document.