

Hon. Justin Madden MP
Minister for Planning
Department of Planning and Community Development
Level 17
8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne 3002

20 December 2007

Dear Minister Madden,

Re. the need for an Environmental Impact assessment concerning the proposed construction of a desalination plant near Wonthaggi.

I have received advice that the Minister for Water has recently lodged with you, the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) referral document for the proposed desalination plant at Wonthaggi. I understand that you have twenty days in which to make a decision about whether a full EES will be required.

Minister, you will be aware that serious concerns are now being expressed within the Victorian community about the government's sudden change in policy and direction in respect of moving the state to a point where water use becomes sustainable.

Experience around the world indicates that these plants can have considerable impacts on coastal environments.

With reference to the proposed desalination plant there is concern about the following:

- ▶ size and scale of this new water infrastructure;
- ▶ the long-term energy demand that it will represent;
- ▶ whether it is really necessary, its location, its long-term impact upon coastal planning and development;
- ▶ the likely environmental and social impacts;
- ▶ the capital cost and the effect of this upon future water pricing and various charges;
- ▶ the arrangements for financing.

If the Brumby government is to build and maintain credibility in respect of transparent governance arrangements and its management of the state's water resources and services, then it is essential that a complete EES be conducted.

I therefore urge you to give this matter serious consideration so that all Victorians can feel confident in the fact that any final decision is the outcome of a government that has followed due and proper process.

Yours sincerely

Mary Crooks
Project Director
Watermark Australia