

## Sutherland Shire Council

### Presentation to the Inquiry into a Sustainable Water Supply for Sydney

10 March 2006



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### Critical Infrastructure

- 16 November 2005 Minister declares desalination plant as critical infrastructure
- Also authorises submission of a concept plan
- Justification was it is the only option to meet Sydney's water demands within the timeframe of the end of 2008
- Other options such as recycling have longer lead times.



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### Minister

- Recent announcement that desal plant will only be built once dam levels drop below 30%
- Availability of other options within the new timeframe
- In the light of this, is the proposed desalination plant considered critical infrastructure?



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### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- No detail on proposed methods for off setting greenhouse emissions.
- Commitment that a portfolio of measures will be developed.
- Recent announcement that the plant will be powered by 100% green power.



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### Department of Planning

- What legal status does the recent announcement have?
- Will the proposal be assessed on the basis of this announcement or will it be assessed as exhibited?



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### Sydney Water

- Where is this green power to come from?
- Particularly as the Environmental Assessment notes that the power usage of a 125ML/day plant is 225GWh/yr and the total green power sales in NSW last year was only 190GWh.



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### Water Quality

- Environmental Assessment notes that the water quality modelling has not been calibrated.
- Environmental Assessment notes that the types and amounts of chemicals to be used in the process are not known as yet.
- Need this information to accurately assess impacts on water quality.



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### Sydney Water

- Is the modelling to be calibrated in accordance with the consultant's recommendations?
- If so will the results be made available to the public?
- Will the model be re-run once the final make-up of the chemical discharge from the plant is known, and will these results be made available to the public?



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### Aquatic Ecology Impacts

- Impacts from entrainment and impingement but not sufficiently quantified.
- No data available on what marine life is present in the intake and outlet zones, particularly the planktonic community.
- No data available on the response of local species to increased salinity levels and toxic discharges.
- Without this information impacts on marine ecology cannot be properly assessed.



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### Sydney Water

- What is the anticipated timeframe of the toxicity and salinity studies referred to in the EA, and will the results of these studies be made available to the public?
- What is the anticipated timeframe of the studies of local marine biota, including the planktonic community, and will these results be made available to the public?
- What extent of delays are Sydney Water prepared to accept during periods of whale migration?



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### NSW Fisheries

- During the planning focus meeting NSW Fisheries specifically requested that intake and outlet structures not be located on rocky reefs due to their high biodiversity values. Given that both intake and outlet structures are located on rocky reefs, do NSW Fisheries still consider this unacceptable?
- Do NSW Fisheries consider that the level of assessment is sufficient to accurately assess potential impacts on marine life?



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### Terrestrial Ecological Impacts

- No surveys for threatened species or endangered ecological communities beyond the actual site of the proposed plant.
- Surrounding areas and proposed infrastructure routes contain threatened species such as Green & Golden Bell Frog, and several endangered communities.



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### Sydney Water

- Do Sydney Water intend to undertake detailed ecological surveys of the proposed distribution routes?
- Will these surveys be undertaken at appropriate times of the year to detect the appropriate species?
- Will the results of these surveys be made available to the public?



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### Department of Environment and Conservation

- Given that there has been no detailed surveys for threatened species beyond the actual plant site itself, does the DEC consider that the assessment complies with the DEC's Guidelines for Threatened Species Assessment?
- Does the DEC consider the level of assessment for threatened sufficient to make an informed impact assessment?



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### Spoil Management and Transport

- Location of spoil generating activities is not known (not even which local government areas this will occur).
- Duration of works, generation rates, final disposal sites not known.
- Final works may be different from the options presented within the EA.



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### Sydney Water

- When in the process will affected communities be notified and consulted with?
- Will there be sufficient flexibility to respond to resident concerns?
- What strategies will Sydney water use to deal with residents concerns, that have no obvious solution (eg drilling opposite residents on Prince Charles Pde)?



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### Indigenous Heritage

- No surveys for indigenous heritage beyond the actual plant site itself.
- Extensive archaeological deposits on the Kurnell peninsula and Botany Bay.



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### Sydney Water

- Do Sydney Water intend to undertake detailed surveys for sites beyond the plant site, if so will the results of these studies be made available to the community?
- Will they rely on stop work if found provisions exclusively?



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### Inadequate Consultation

- Much consultation occurred after the fact, and takes the form of information provision rather than consultation.
- DG's requirements state that adequate consultation must be undertaken with Sutherland Shire Council and the local community.
- Requests for information from Sydney Water under FOI have not been granted.
- DG requires Department of Planning to consult with relevant authorities as to the adequacy of the EA prior to public exhibition.



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### Department of Environment and Conservation

- Was the DEC consulted as to the adequacy of the EA between the period of lodgement with the DoP on 18 November 2005 and 24 November 2005 when the EA went on public exhibition?
- If so did the DEC consider this consultation adequate?



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### Department of Primary Industries (NSW Fisheries)

- Was the NSW Fisheries consulted as to the adequacy of the EA between the period of lodgement with the DoP on 18 November 2005 and 24 November 2005 when the EA went on public exhibition?
- If so did the DPI consider this consultation adequate?



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### Specific Requirements of the Director General

- DG's requirements clearly laid out in letter to Sydney Water dated 18 November 2005.
- EA released on public exhibition on 24 November 2005.
- Areas of non compliance
- Detailed description of the proposal
- Inadequate justification for the proposal (including the site selection process)
- Green house gas off sets



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### Specific Requirements of the Director General (cont.)

- Ecological impacts (both aquatic and terrestrial)
- Details of spoil management
- Details of connecting infrastructure
- Consultation requirements.



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### Sydney Water

- What amendments were made to the draft Environmental Assessment, between the issuing of the DG's requirements on 18 November 2005 and 24 November 2005, to specifically address these requirements?



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## Department of Planning

- What action does the Department of Planning intend to undertake given that Environmental Assessment does not comply with the requirements of the Director General.
- Will the DoP require the EA to be amended to meet these requirements, and if so will the amended EA be the subject of further public exhibition and consultation?



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## Consideration of Alternatives

- SSC has considerable experience in the implementation of water conservation measures, including water recycling, which have resulted in considerable water savings.
- Justification for the desalination plant was that at the time, it was the only strategy that could be implemented within the timeframe of 2008.
- Increased timeframe provides new opportunity for consideration and implementation of alternatives.



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## Sydney Water

- Now the timeframe for the desalination plant has increased, does this increase the potential for consideration and implementation of other alternatives which have longer lead times?



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