

INQUIRY INTO A SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLY FOR SYDNEY

Organisation:

Name: Mr Norman Delmas

Telephone:

Date Received: 16/02/2006

Subject:

Summary

To Mr Ian Cohen, Chair, General Purpose Standing Committee No 5,

Please regard this as a submission to the Inquiry into a sustainable water supply for Sydney. I am responding to the Terms of Reference.

My main concern is that the proposed plant as described in the Environmental Assessment report sources its water in the vicinity of industrial effluent outfalls of Caltex refineries, Kurnell.

1. The Environmental Assessment report is deficient in considering the nature and contaminating influence of the effluent discharged some 200 metres from the proposed intake to the desalination plant.
2. The NSW EPA is supposedly in control of the refineries' emissions to air, land and waters, however exercises little control seeking abatement or reduction of emissions. This is obvious by scrutinising the NPI database which reveals yearly increases in all environmental contaminants from the refineries.
3. The Caltex refineries are not scaling down their production and have heavily invested in new plants and machinery to ensure its long-term use of the Kurnell site. Accordingly, it could be expected that emissions to air, land and water emanating from the refineries' activities will increase. Moreover, with the new petrol standards, the emissions of the refineries are only going to become more toxic. As shown in the supporting documentation seeking DA approval from the Planning Minister for the plant modifications required to meet the new standards.
4. The NSW EPA holds data through its licencing regime upon the refineries. The nature of the effluent discharged to water at Tabagai Gap and Yena Gap, Kurnell in the vicinity of the proposed intake of the desalination plant has a high potential to taint water and all marine organisms. However, none of this data was included in the Environmental Assessment report. Indeed, what was termed existing industrial effluents was discounted in the report as being of little concern due to dilution. Clearly this oversight could endanger the entire water system of Sydney if the desalination plant is located on the Kurnell peninsula.

5. In terms of potable water use relating to the refineries, I am aware from data submitted to the Commission of Inquiry into Co-generation Plant 1997 that the consumption rate is in the order of 150 kL/h. This is used in steam raising plant for processing and transferring of product within the refinery. Tertiary treated effluent from the Cronulla STP could be used as boiler feed water and alleviate the need for potable water use. A power station based on the Central Coast is already doing this. It should be noted that all water influent to steam raising plant requires conditioning prior to use regardless of sourcing.
6. The Chair of this Standing Committee should understand the environmental impacts that Caltex has at these two outfall locations. It should be easy to recognize the potential impact of the refineries' proximity to a desalination plant at Kurnell.

I find it extremely disappointing that Sydney Water ignored my comments in relation to the Caltex refineries effluent matter prior to the release of the Environmental Impact statement. "Dilution" is not the solution.

Yours Sincerely,
Norman Delmas