



16 APR 2003

HON NICK GRIFFITHS LLB MLC
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING;
GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES;
GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE



Our ref: 006784

Ms Cherry Davies
Lot 11 Lance St
Mt Helena WA 6082

Dear Ms Davies,

I am writing in reference to our discussion of 14 March 2003. I have contacted the Managing Director of the Water Corporation on the issues raised and he has provided the following information.

Mundaring Water Treatment Plant and the Swayers Valley Tank:

The Mundaring Weir supplies the Goldfields and Agricultural Water Supply (G&AWS), via the 550 kilometre long main conduit, and the hills suburbs of Mundaring, Glen Forrest, Mahogany Creek, Hovea, Stoneville, Sawyers Valley, Mount Helena, Parkerville, Chidlow, Wooroloo and Beechina. Disinfection of the drinking water supply is by chloramination at Mundaring Weir, with re-chlorination at strategic points within the G&AWS.

Management of water quality from the Mundaring Weir source on the Helena River is an ongoing challenge for the Water Corporation. Water quality can be affected by factors such as heavy rainfall, low reservoir water levels, recreational activities and land use practices in the catchment.

To conform to the 1996 Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and to manage the declining water quality in the Helena Reservoir (the Lower Helena Pumpback provides 45% of annual yield from Mundaring), the Water Corporation is planning to construct a water treatment plant. A site for the proposed plant has been selected near the Corporation's existing tanks at Sawyers Valley. It lies within Water Reserve No. 6203

Project Cost

The estimated total cost for the Mundaring Water Treatment Plant project is \$55 million. This comprises \$15 million for the first stage, which includes a 50-ML storage tank at Sawyers Valley, and \$40 million for the second stage, construction of the water treatment plant. Due to budgetary constraints, the second stage may not commence for about three years.

Planning and Current Status

Planning and investigation for works at the proposed site at Sawyers Valley is almost completed. The cost for the work so far is approaching \$2 million. Nineteen alternative sites for the works were investigated in the Shires of Mundaring and Kalamunda. Criteria such as public health and safety, environmental impact, Aboriginal and other heritage issues, visual impact, buffer zones, energy requirements, engineering feasibility and cost were addressed.

On 14 October 2002 the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) assessed the Mundaring Water Treatment Plant and Sawyers Valley Water Storage proposals (at the Sawyers Valley site) and decided that they can be managed in an environmentally acceptable way. The EPA recommended to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage that the proposals be conditionally approved.

Five appeals were received by the Appeals Convenor against the EPA's recommendation before the objection period closed on 28 October 2002.

Water treatment processes for the plant will include chloramination (chlorine and ammonia injection), fluoridation, pH adjustment and filtration. Filtration could be "old technology" – direct filtration through dual media gravity filters with alum and polymer flocculation and coagulation – or "new technology" microfiltration with poly-aluminium chloride flocculation and coagulation.

Proposed Development at Stoneville and Parkerville:

The MRS Amendment, proposing the change in zoning for Rural to Urban, was initially referred to Water Corporation for comment on the 7 July 2000, and the Water Corporation responded on 13 October 2000.

The Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) requested further information on specific issues relating to wastewater treatment and disposal arising from the appeals process on 29 January 2001. The Corporation was approached in relation to these matters because of its expertise in this wastewater treatment plants, and an internal review was undertaken to address the request. On 26 April 2001 DPI was informed of the findings of this review.

The outcome of the MRS amendment was gazetted on the 5 November 2002 with the application granted "Urban Deferred" status until such time as the resolution of effluent disposal issues was finalised to the satisfaction of DPI.

There has been strong local opposition to the suitability of the area for the location of wastewater treatment plants for a variety of reasons. The primary concern relates to the geomorphic suitability for the disposal of the treated effluent. The Corporation's belief is that while it is technically feasible to construct wastewater treatment plants in the area, they would require large holding ponds for winter storage and would be expensive to construct.

The Corporation had met with some local residents during the advertising period for the amendment and they were informed of the Corporation's planned treatment of the application.

The area of the MRS amendment is within the current non exclusive operating licence area for wastewater services for Perth, held by the Corporation, but is outside the proposed sole provider status licence area proposed to the Office of Water Regulation. As such, the Corporation would approach any infrastructure provision on a commercial basis and this philosophy has been related to DPI.

Water supply for this area is within the current non exclusive operating licence area and is also within the proposed sole provider status operating licence area and will require extensive upgrading of infrastructure to meet the proposed demands if the developments were to proceed as proposed. The developers would be required to pre-fund these works as part of their development costs.

The Stoneville development area is partially within the Jane Brook catchment, which has been identified by Waters and Rivers Commission as a future water reserve, although it has not been officially gazetted as such. The Corporation has no plans in the immediate future to utilise Jane Brook as a potential source, but is still investigating its possible inclusion into the integrated water source for Perth. The water quality in the Jane Brook catchment is marginal and would require extensive treatment before it could be included.

Current Situation

The Corporation has recently met with the developer's consultants for the Parkerville development (Hidden Valley) and they have expressed an interest in developing the area with lot sizes above 2000m² to avoid the need to provide reticulated sewer services. Should they proceed with this proposal, it would make the viability of a reticulated scheme to the Stoneville development (Roland Road) questionable.

I trust that this helps to clarify the current status of these matters and your further observations are requested.

Yours sincerely



**NICK GRIFFITHS LLB MLC
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING;
GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES; GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE**