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Southern Seawater Desalination Project

Community Newsletter – July 2008

Another opportunity to have your say

The desalination project needs approval from both the State and Federal Environment Ministers.

Your recent submissions to the State Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) will help the WA minister make a decision on the environmental acceptability of the project.

As you know, the Federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEHWA) will also undertake an assessment of the impacts the project might have, particularly on endangered and threatened species. The Federal Minister for the Environment will then also make a decision on its environmental acceptability.

The Federal Government will look at the potential impacts on such flora and fauna such:

- Baudin's Black-Cockatoo
- Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo
- Western Ringtail Possum
- Chuditch, Western Quoll (pictured)
- Blue Whale
- Humpback Whale
- Pygmy Whale
- Southern Right Whale
- Glossy-leaved Hammer-Orchid
- Dwarf Hammer-orchid
- Leatherback Turtle
- Loggerhead Turtle
- Grey Nurse Shark
- Great White Shark
- Migratory shorebirds

We are now putting together a Commonwealth Government Public Environment Report (CPR) that will detail our management strategies for dealing with any potential impacts the project might have on issues of national environmental significance. This will then be submitted to DEHWA and they will decide when to release it for public comment.

This means your community has another opportunity to put forward their local knowledge and concerns to better protect the flora and fauna of the area. Like the State Government process, a submission to the Federal Government is a way for you to provide information and express your opinion about the proposal. Most importantly, you can make suggestions about ways to improve the proposal.



This new CPR will draw on the studies that were used in the State PER document. It will also use some information from studies that have been submitted since the first PER was completed. These studies are all available on our website.

The public comment period will start when the draft CPR has been approved by DEHWA. We will keep you informed as to the timing of these dates – the length of which will be a minimum of 20 days.

Your submissions to the EPA have had an impact



Thank you to everyone who wrote a submission to the state Environmental Protection Authority on our Public Environmental Review document. The Water Corporation is currently responding to these submissions by writing back to the EPA. The EPA will soon release a Bulletin outlining its advice on whether it considers the project environmentally acceptable. There were some good suggestions and comments in the submissions to the PER and we have made some changes to reflect these including:

- The Alliance will be directed to use stock fencing around and through parts of the site to allow for the movement of animals like kangaroos and possums along the north-south corridor of the site.
- We will continue discussions with the Binningup Surf Life-Saving Club to ensure that its activities are not unnecessarily disrupted by any beach or ocean closure.
- We have commissioned another study on the population and migratory movements of whales in the Binningup and Myalup area to add to the knowledge of cetaceans in the local area. We also commissioned two literature studies by environmental consulting firm URS on the likely effects of the project on cetaceans.
- We recognise that Red Tail Black Cockatoos occur within the proposed plant site. Detailed surveys have been completed over the site. All habitat trees have been identified and will not be impacted.
- Following the concerns expressed about de-watering, diaphragm walls will be used when constructing the seawater pump station, which means the amount of dewatering undertaken will now be very minimal.

Indigenous Heritage Report

The Water Corporation recognises the indigenous significance of the south-west in its investigations into the site for the desal plant, the pipeline and the Harvey summit tanks. Detailed ethnographic and archaeological studies have been undertaken and we are now awaiting the completion of an indigenous heritage report.



As part of this report, in June, the Water Corporation conducted a two-day consultation with the Gnaala Karla Boodja Native Title Claimant Group. The Group visited the Perth desal plant at Kwinana to gain an understanding of the desalination process and its infrastructure and then headed south for a field consultation at the proposed second plant site near Binningup. The Group also took a drive of the pipeline route and held discussions at the location of the proposed summit tanks.

The group were very keen to ensure the preservation of habitat trees along the pipeline route and were pleased to hear that due to the flexibility of the route within a 20m corridor, many trees will be protected. Due to the historic use of the area, the Group were also concerned to ensure that indigenous monitors will be present when construction begins to detect the presence of archaeological material, skeletal material and to advise on the minimisation of construction impacts. The Water Corporation made this commitment in the PER.

Recent additions to the website

- URS Literature Reviews on the effects of brine and noise on cetaceans (whales and dolphins) http://www.watercorporation.com.au/D/desal2_per.cfm
- Updated Frequently Asked Questions
- Map showing where infrastructure **might** go on the site in order to fit the footprint set by WC

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