

18 May 2000

Mr Allan Weatherley
Project Manager, Projects and Infrastructure Division
Department of State Development
PO Box 168
BRISBANE ALBERT STREET QLD 4002.

Dear Mr Weatherley,

Re: Draft Supplementary Impact Assessment Study on the groundwater options for the Millmerran Power Project.

The Condamine Catchment Management Association (CCMA) would like to make the following submission on the groundwater options for the Millmerran Power Project following the review of the Draft Supplementary Impact Assessment Study (SIAS). Our primary concerns are outlined below.

Information on the Hutton Sandstone Aquifer

It is our understanding that the information provided in the SIAS concerning the Hutton Sandstone Aquifer is based on information derived at the request of the Millmerran Power Partners (MPP). To our knowledge this information has not been verified by the Department of Natural Resources, the State's lead agency for water resource management or an independent consultant not linked to the MPP. The CCMA is concerned that until this information is independently reviewed and verified, the potential cumulative impacts resulting from the additional licence on the Hutton sandstone aquifer cannot be adequately considered. The CCMA does not consider it acceptable for the decision on whether or not to grant the licence request is to be based solely on the information provided by the applicants for that licence.

Use of Millmerran town borefield

The SIAS does not seem to clearly indicate any potential impacts on licence holders in the Millmerran town borefield (outside the Millmerran Power Project land) should MPP begin to utilise the allocation provided by Millmerran Shire Council which has not been accessed in the past.

Further work needs to occur to determine the potential impact of activating this allocation on surrounding licences. If the use of the Millmerran town borefield is approved, MPP must clearly indicate what their action will be to mitigate any adverse impact on yields/pressure on bores owned by neighbouring landholders. A designated timeframe for action by Millmerran Power Partners must also be clearly identified.

Impact on Existing Groundwater Users in the Hutton Sandstone Aquifer

MPP must adequately consult and negotiate with those bore owners potentially affected to establish a clear process regarding what information is required to prove that the Project has caused the loss of groundwater from an existing bore. It is essential that these negotiations clearly indicate what information will be required by MPP from the bore owner before MPP will 'make good that loss of groundwater' as stated in the Executive Summary (page 2).

Modelling capabilities

It is essential that the modelling used to determine the potential impact on bores outside the Millmerran Power Project land fully considers all bore allocations in the aquifers.

Long-term Monitoring

Any future monitoring of the aquifers must monitor trends in groundwater quality and quantity. It is essential that if the groundwater supply options are approved that there will be no negative impact on water reliability and water quality for users throughout the aquifers in question over the lifetime of the project.

The CCMA would appreciate receiving regular reports on the outcomes of the monitoring program that is to be implemented by MPP.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Potter
Coordinator – Condamine Catchment Management Association Inc.