

02/12/2016

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Essential Services Commission

Level 37/2 Lonsdale St

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Re Melbourne Water's-2016 tariff Patterson Lakes.

This submission is simply about ensuring that the Patterson Lakes bore runs.

Summary

I am a resident living on the quiet lakes and as such have significant concern about the outcome of your deliberations on this issue.

I am aware of the submissions objecting to the tariff, all of which have several areas on which we all can agree on.

1. That prior to the Independent inquiry the quiet lakes (Patterson lakes) had a significant issue regarding BGA.
2. That following three years of trials running the bore at 1.5 mega litres every day for the period November to End of March there was a significant improvement in water quality and the BGA issue was resolved.
3. That the residents were exceptionally pleased with the result. The lakes water was healthy and the lakes could be used safely for their intended use and design i.e. recreation.
4. Now after four year of the bore operation the water improvement has been confirmed with the BGA continued not to be an issue.

5. Sunset on tariff.

MW have posted a notice on the lakes bulletin board regarding the submission of the tariff to the ESC. In this notice they have set a five year life of the tariff commencing 2016.

I am concerned about this five year limit and its commencement date. The tariff relating to the running of the bore should not have a sunset. Secondly there is no plan outlined as to what will happen regarding the bore operation after the five year period has expired.

Regardless of the outcome re-funding of the bore, its operation, with certainty, must continue into the future on the test period criteria.

The most important part of your deliberation is not who will pay for running the bore but assuring that the bore runs with certainty into the future...

The bore must run, without a sunset, this is a health issue and simply is THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

Detail information

The tariff and trials involved two of the three lakes namely Lake Legana and Lake Illawong. The third Lake Carramar is not included in the tariff.

The annual cost of running the bore was established by MW as \$40,000 per year which breaks down to \$156 per lake side property. This cost covered the power to operate the bore October to the end of March seven days a week pumping into the lakes 1.5 mega litres per day.

MW has denied responsibility for running the bore but agreed to run it if an agreement could be established for the residents to pay.

An independent poll was conducted paid for by MW. The result of the poll was that 75% of residents agreed to pay to operate the bore over the summer months.

The 75% more than met MW criteria and considered an exceptionally high level of approval.

There were no conditions to the poll and running of the bore it was simply YES or NO arrangement.

Subsequently MW informed the residents of the outcome and that MW would submit the tariff to the ESC for ratification. In the meantime, last summer, (2015-2016) they would continue to run the bore.

The current situations is we have three maybe four funding scenarios.

1. The guaranteed funding from the residents with 75% yes vote on the MW poll.
2. MW. However they refuse to fund the bore operation.
3. Waterways and drainage charge funds.
4. ESC who provided the funds for next summer while the issue is being resolved.

Currently out of the above there is only one that guarantees funding and long term certainty, this is the residents.

All of the objection submissions are detailed and comprehensive ..

I would like to point out that the tariff is a simple one item issue based on significantly improving water quality in the two lakes to the healthy level achieved over the three year trial period.

Bottom line...

I put it to you, if payment comes from elsewhere, great, but like the 75% of residents that said yes to the MW poll I am prepared to pay for the bore operation, it provides long term certainty of the bore operation with all the benefits it gives to the lake side residents. I.e. Clean healthy water and no negative effect on Lake House prices.

The objections to the tariff have provided an over whelming amount of data and background however my submission is simply to ensure that the bore runs for the benefit of the lakes residents and surrounding area.

After pursuing this issue for many years and now on the verge of it being resolved I ask you, the ESC, do not let the residents down, make sure the bore runs. For the bore not to run would create a serious environment issue for the lake side residents.

Should you wish to discuss this issue further I am available any time.

Have a great day

Graham Tonta