



28 March 2008

Mr S Crees  
Essential Services Commission  
Level 2, 35 Spring Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000



Dear Mr Crees

**SUBMISSION TO WATER PRICE REVIEW – CONSULTATION AND ASSESSMENTS OF FUTURE PROJECTS FOR COUNTRY TOWNS WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE PROGRAM**

I refer to the above matter and provide comments as a result of formal resolution by Council at its meeting held on 18 March 2008, and in relation to consideration by the Essential Services Commission of future projects for consideration under the Country Towns Water and Sewerage Program, as follows:

1. Reticulated sewerage for the Glenmaggie and Coongulla townships has been the subject of extensive planning for well over 20 years and it is considered by Council that urgent action is now required to resolve this long standing public health issue.

The Wellington Domestic Wastewater Management Plan, prepared under State funding and at the direction of the State accords a high priority to sewerage for these above townships. Currently poorly performing septic tank systems are discharging largely untreated effluent into Lake Glenmaggie (utilised for potable drinking water supply and irrigation activities). Study over years has indicated that this public and environmental health issue is increasing and Council has now restricted future developments within the area surrounding the Lake significantly impacting on land owners.

It is requested that the Water Review raises significantly the priority for reticulated sewerage for the townships of Coongulla and Glenmaggie and that strategies are recommended to expedite these required sewerage schemes.

2. The Department of Sustainability and Environment have, as outlined in the Gippsland Water 2008 Water Price Review, significantly reduced the level of funding to both the Loch Sport (largest unsewered township in Victoria) and the Coongulla and Lake Glenmaggie sewerage schemes. It is requested that this reduction in funding be challenged by the Essential Services Commission and that direction be provided through this Water Price Review process to support additional funding to small

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township sewerage schemes to alleviate public and environmental health risk currently present in these communities.

3. It is requested that the Essential Services Commission ensure that all development areas of Glenmaggie, Glenmaggie Point and Coongulla are included within any sewerage schemes which may be proposed for the Glenmaggie and Coongulla townships.
4. In reviewing many of the submissions relating to the Gippsland Water - Final Water Plan, a common comment has been raised that the Loch Sport area is not within the jurisdictional area of Gippsland Water. This is incorrect and the submitters are inaccurate and appear to have been misled in raising these comments.

The Loch Sport area is most definitely within the responsibility of Gippsland Water with Gippsland Water together with Wellington Shire Council and the Department of Sustainability and Environment having worked together for many years to develop the current proposal for reticulated sewerage for Loch Sport. Through this process there has never been any suggestion that Gippsland Water is not responsible for the future sewerage district area of Loch Sport.

5. The lack of reticulated sewerage within small country communities exacerbated by continuing population growth, is raising the ire of local communities who frequently bring to the attention of Council their 'third world living conditions'. Council has developed a Domestic Waste Water Management Plan as above indicated, and urgently requires the assistance of the State Government to appropriately fund these required schemes over a planned period of time and to provide clear direction to the responsible water authorities to meet these planned timelines.

Please contact me if any further information is required and I would be pleased to participate in any further discussion in the above or related matters. I have also attached a copy of the referred Wellington Domestic Waste Water Management Plan for your further information.

Yours faithfully



STEVEN DICKSON  
Director Community & Development