



Watershed Victoria-Media Alert 6Nov2008

Friday 7th Nov. 2008 - A Watershed Day for Victoria.

The State Labour Government was opposed to desalination before the November 2006 election, after seven years in office, but did a back-flip six months later when it announced it will commit in excess of \$3.1 billion dollars of our money, to build the largest water factory in the southern hemisphere here on the Kilcunda-Dalyston coastline.

No mandate - certainly. Dishonest - seemingly. Environmental & democratic crime – surely.
Is the DSE charged for this crime – no!

However, a Watershed Victoria supporter, dismayed by the Government's actions, takes a few paces along a the public road closed by DSE at night, and she is summoned to Court here in Wonthaggi on a charge of trespass. What for?

Standing up for democracy and public land access rights.

Watershed Victoria will hold a street march commencing on the Inverloch approach to Wonthaggi at 9am tomorrow, proceeding through the main street to the Wonthaggi Courthouse arriving by about 9:30am

A protest on a miscarriage of our justice system.

The Environmental Effects Statement non-Hearing concludes at Pakenham. I say non-Hearing because the terms of reference set by the Government do not allow the panel to consider and report, on behalf of Victorians, whether the desalination plant is the best option to supply extra water to Melbourne.

Watershed believes the EES should come to a STANDSTILL until the Environment threats are properly identified and remedied, if that is achievable.

The Government's "amazing" Risk Assessments are flawed. For example -some reports are so poor they need to be started again from scratch: the Underwater Noise Impact, Marine Mammals, Biology, Hydrology and brine dispersion....plus more !

Watershed Victoria say the Government purposely neglected to present contract variations and options for environmental assessment in the EES. These are critical impact issues, such as pipeline trenching on the ocean floor and dumping multiple tonnage of bio-waste daily back into the ocean.

The Victorian Government failed to present a required identification of threats to protected whales – the Southern Right and Humpback – plus the Great White Shark, which have their habitat in the discharge area. Local people responded with photos, film and sworn statements to highlight their regular presence. Under the Precautionary Principle, the EES in its present condition should fail to get Federal EPBC Act approval from Minister Garrett, because of threats including underwater acoustics required in the Federal Environment Recovery Plans for these protected species. **The Panel's report is due 4th December.**

"The Gift" art show commences at 7pm in the Dalyston Community Hall, continuing Saturday and Sunday 10am-4pm. The show centres around a poem and some 13 paintings produced by local artists to express their concern and dismay by the Government plan for a desalination plant, and the lack of proper and due process.

Stephen Cannon
President, Watershed Victoria
0407811778