



5 Billion

## HELPING POLLUTERS?

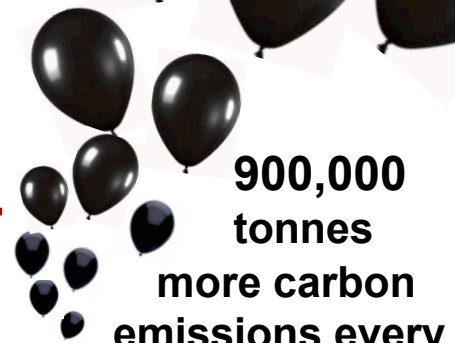


## WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF NAB'S INVOLVEMENT?



## GOVERNMENT PLANNED

# DESAL



900,000 tonnes more carbon emissions every year than if alternatives had been adopted

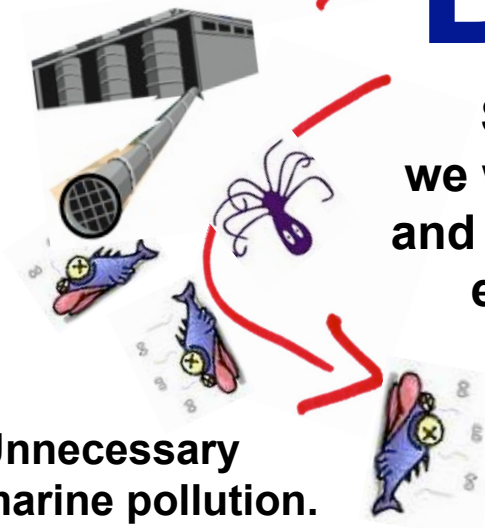
State Government have said we will pay through our water bills, and other means, at least \$500 extra every year to build this plant. The alternatives might only have cost half as much.

Unnecessary marine pollution.

Better alternatives would reduce existing pollution going into the sea

The desal is huge, supplying 1/3 of all our water, so no sustainable alternatives will happen!

Ring NAB to express your concerns - 1300 889398  
ask for their corporate responsibility officer  
Or write them a letter, suggestions and mailing addresses  
at: [www.watershedvictoria.org.au](http://www.watershedvictoria.org.au)



## What are we on about ?

On the 31st July, Aquasure, a consortium made up of Suez Environnement (affiliated to Degremont), Theiss and Maquarie Capital announced that it would be building the Wonthaggi desalination plant.

Aquasure and the State of Victoria secured a financing package lead by Westpac and NAB, and supported by banks from Belgium, China, France, Italy, Japan, Spain and the UK.

After letters and phone calls from concerned citizens, NAB's response was that they have asked AquaSure whether the project is acceptable. The bank require the project to meet the Equator Principles, an internationally recognised agreement on environmentally responsible development signed by the bank in 2007.

It must have been easy for AquaSure to refer to the Environmental Effects Statement (EES), produced by the government proponent, the Department of Sustainability and the Environment (DSE). **The EES provided no funding for independently appointed experts and was scoped by government to exclude many of the most significant issues.**

An EES which admitted that the 'urgency of the project', meant an inability or lack of time to complete many studies, with desktop studies having to suffice.

An EES where the effects of the marine effluent in particular could not be specified as a final design of the plant has still not been completed.

An EES, queried by over 400 public submissions, with a government appointed panel, which heard government appointed "experts" answer with: 'we didn't look at that', or 'sorry, we don't have any expertise in that area', in response to many questions.

An EES that inevitably only sought to 'avoid or minimise' harm, and said the project could go ahead subject to a list of recommendations specific to what they could study.

These recommendations, when put to the planning minister to allow the project, had the further rider, 'where practicable', appended to nearly a third of them. Given the size of the project, planned to be the largest desalination plant in Australia, the EES was inadequate and insufficient for such a complex public infrastructure project.

Some marine species likely to be affected will be: migrating Blue, Southern Right and Humpback whales; Dolphins; Little Penguins; Seals and Sea lions; Leatherback Turtles; and Sharks, including the Great White Shark.

French infrastructure company GDF Suez, whose subsidiary Suez Environment is a lead member of the Aquasure consortium, has a track record of breaches of performance requirements. It was fined \$305,000 in February after illegally logging Amazon rainforest during the construction of the \$5.6 billion hydro-electric dam in Brazil.

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/desal-firm-logged-the-amazon-20090801-e58t.html>

In a time of increased concern about climate change, the carbon emissions associated with the huge energy use by the plant make it irresponsible to build. With only one larger desalination plant operating anywhere in the world, the scale of desalination proposed would prevent as many as 900,000 tonnes of existing emissions being avoided every year, and environmental benefits that would have come from alternative water supply options will be lost.

NAB claims to have a set of corporate environmental principles guiding their investment strategies. It is difficult to see how they can be reconciled with investing in the Wonthaggi desalination plant.

**The NAB should be undertaking due diligence on this proposed investment. We are requesting that, before any financial support for the project is agreed, a full, thorough and independent Environmental Audit is undertaken.**

**NAB may find that their investment is not consistent with its stated corporate responsibilities and obligations toward the environment.**