



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

14th February 2006

DSS17 BELLBROOK WATER SUPPLY
FILE: * AMB

SUMMARY:

Reporting on Bellbrook water supply.



DESCRIPTION:

Macleay Water has faced problems with the raw water supply (bores in the shingle bed) at Bellbrook since the middle of 2005. The raw water has not been meeting Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG). Macleay Water has embarked on several courses of action and this report updates Council on their progress and the costs borne to date.

A new bore was sunk to improve the raw water quality. To date the quality of this raw water, whilst improved, water has not consistently met the ADWG. Macleay Water has worked with NSW Health (Port Macquarie Population Health and Sydney Water Unit) on a sampling programme to gain a set of data in which more permanent solutions may be determined. Results from the third round of sampling are currently being compiled and analysed by NSW Health and options will shortly be discussed.

In the interim, a surface water bore has been developed to draw raw water from the river itself (surface water) as opposed to the river's shingle bed. The surface raw water does not contain the contaminants found in the shingle bed that caused the raw water from the bore to be noncompliant with the ADWG.

The surface water does have **some** water quality constraints. The quality constraints and the current solution(s) are listed below.

- In periods of rain the river turbidity restricts the success of the chlorination (disinfection) and ability to meet ADWG – portable turbidity testing equipment purchased, sampling regime established, Macleay water staff assessing 7 days per week, liaison with community members established for

advance notice of river freshes, carting water into town from Willawarrin and Greenhill when turbidity exceeds level for successful chlorination.

- Potential of pollutants in the surface water – in conjunction with NSW Health have established microbiological sampling regime to monitor microbial quality.

The turbidity events in recent months have been frequent and the additional costs are mounting. Additional costs are approximately \$100,000 as at 1 February 2006 for the 2005/6 financial year. The additional costs include water cartage, wages, vehicles and testing. It is not possible to cover the additional costs from current water funds without a negative impact on service provision and a transfer from Water Supply Working Funds is requested.

Macleay Water has contacted Department of Energy Utilities and Sustainability (DEUS) to seek Emergency funding assistance to defray the additional Bellbrook costs. Although usually reserved for drought assistance and the like, this request will be considered.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- **Environmental**

There are no environmental impacts from this report.

- **Social**

Macleay Water is working with NSW Health to ensure safe drinking water is supplied to the Bellbrook community.

- **Economic (Financial)**

Funds are required to cover the mounting additional costs for Bellbrook water supply. It is estimated \$140,000 will be required to cover costs to the end of the financial year. Current Water Supply Working Funds balance is \$361,289, which includes provision for expenditure of \$140,000 in respect of the Bellbrook Water Supply, and it is recommended that funds be transferred to cover the anticipated costs.

DEUS emergency funding may become available to defray some of the additional costs.

- **Policy or Statutory**

There are no policy impacts from this report and all statutory requirements are being met.

- **Director's Review**

Council has no choice but to ensure the water provided to residents is safe and complies with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

That \$140,000 be transferred from Water Supply Working Funds to cover the costs incurred for Bellbrook water supply.

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K J Finnie
DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES