



Hunter Water Corporation
ABN 46 228 513 446

PO Box 5171
HRMC NSW 2310
36 Honeysuckle Drive
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300
1300 657 657 (T)
(02) 4979 9625 (F)
enquiries@hunterwater.com.au
hunterwater.com.au

11 December 2015

Our Ref: HW2015-1190/3/7.001

Mr David Sullivan
Committee Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Email: fadt.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Sullivan

HUNTER WATER SUBMISSION TO WILLIAMTOWN RAAF BASE CONTAMINATION SENATE INQUIRY

Hunter Water is a State Owned Corporation (SOC) providing drinking water, wastewater, recycled water and some stormwater services to a population approaching 575,000 people across the Lower Hunter.

Hunter Water sources its drinking water from a number of surface and groundwater sources, including the Tomago Sandbeds.

The RAAF Base Williamtown is located within the Tomago Sandbeds drinking water catchment area. Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) contamination from RAAF Base Williamtown is already impacting Hunter Water operations via its resulting inability to draw water from some parts of the Tomago Sandbeds.

The attached map shows the location of Hunter Water groundwater extraction infrastructure in red (with blue labels), and groundwater level contours are shown in yellow. The RAAF Base Williamtown is visible in the centre of the map.

Based on the risk of drawing Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) towards Hunter Water borelines, pumping stations PS5, PS7 and PS9 have been embargoed. In 2015 PFAS contamination has been detected at PS9, presumed to be from a plume of contamination originating from the North East corner of the RAAF Base Williamtown.

The impact of not being able to use these borelines is a reduction in the overall yield of drinking water from the Tomago Sandbeds. Hunter Water estimates that the loss of these borelines represents around a 10% reduction in the amount of water that can be accessed over the long term from Tomago Sandbeds and around a 15% reduction in the peak production capacity of the Tomago Sandbeds. This represents 1.5 billion litres of water.

Loss of long term production capacity will have an impact on when a new water source will be required as the region grows into the future. It is estimated that this loss will bring

forward the required timing of a new water source by 2 to 3 years. The cost of bringing forward the next source augmentation is in the order of tens of millions of dollars.

Under certain operating circumstances, loss of peak production capacity from the Tomago Sandbeds can impact Hunter Water's ability to supply enough drinking water when demand is high.

Given the significant community investment and benefit that is obtained from the Tomago Sandbeds groundwater scheme, it is incumbent on the Australian Government to make every effort to restore Hunter Water's ability to use this important drinking water source. Failing this, Hunter Water will seek financial compensation for the expense that will be incurred in providing alternative water supply capability.

Yours sincerely,

Darren Cleary
Chief Operating Officer

ATTACHMENT 1: Hunter Water's Tomago Sandbeds groundwater extraction infrastructure

