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ESK SHIRE COUNCIL

F239
 5/6/01

To: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

From: Ralph Ash – Utilities Engineer

Subject: Inquiry into future water supplies for Australian Rural Industries and Communities

Date: 20 August 2002

The Esk Shire is situated on the north western edge of Brisbane and contains an area of 3946 square kilometres. However the population of the shire is only about 15,800 people and these are scattered over most of the shire. There are several small communities in the shire and these are difficult to service with town water as they are also scattered across the shire.

The main towns and community centres are as follows:-

- Esk with a population of approximately 1,000 people;
- Fernvale with a population of approximately 1,100 people;
- Lowood with a population of approximately 1,050 people;
- Toogoolawah with a population of approximately 950 people;
- Minden Tarampa area with a population of approximately 1,200 people;
- Somerset Dam Township with a population of approximately 150 people;
- Linville with a population of approximately 60 people.

The above towns are served with a treated town water supply except for Linville which is supplied with chlorinated groundwater.

Other Esk Shire communities not served with town water are:

- Coominya with a population of approximately 550 people;
- Wivenhoe Pocket with a population of approximately 400 people;
- Moore area with a population of approximately 200 people;
- Glamorganvale with a population of approximately 60 people; and
- Harlin with a population of approximately 50 people.

The Esk Shire has a very small rate base to rely on to try and operate the seven current water supply schemes. The shire only collects about \$1.5 million in water charges each year and this makes it difficult to operate the current town water supply schemes let alone provide town water to those communities with no town water.

The Federal Government should consider providing funds for town water supply schemes for small scattered communities without town water.

Also there should be some type of annual grant provided to local governments which have water supply shemes serving communities of population less than 2,000 people, and who don't have a large rate base to help subsidise the small communities. The size of populations less than 2000 is recommended as they trigger point as they have less than 1000 connections to a water supply scheme, and such schemes struggle to generate enough income to operate effectively let alone provide income for expansion.

Ralph Ash
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Esk Shire Council

Secretary: *afbe*

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES
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