

Maurice Schinkel

4 October, 2011

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Regional Australia
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra 2600

Submission No:	108
Date Received:	11/10/11
Secretary:	SC

Dear Sir/Madam,

'Drive-in drive-out' nature of the Victorian Desalination Project

The following is in response to an advertisement in the Wednesday, September 7, 2011 edition of the Australian:

" Fly-in fly-out jobs investigated

The House of Representatives Regional Australia Committee is inquiring into the experiences of employers, employees, their families and communities affected by 'fly-in fly-out' and 'drive-in drive-out' workers "

The **drive-in drive-out** nature of the Wonthaggi Desalination Plant is one of the most irresponsible, and poorly investigated aspects of the decision to locate the Victorian Desalination Project at Williamson's Beach in Bass Coast.

Evidence of the '**drive-in drive-out**' nature of the project currently known as the Victorian Desalination Project can be experienced every morning and afternoon at the intersection of the Bass Highway and Lower Powlett Road in Wonthaggi – with a steady stream of cars arriving from the west (the direction of Melbourne) in the morning, and leaving to the west in the afternoon.

Committee members can experience the **drive-in drive-out** nature (and consequences) of the Victorian Desalination Project by merely standing at the above location and observing.

Environment Effects Statement for the Victorian Desalination Project

Of the 84 Technical Appendices prepared for the Environment Effects Statement for the Victorian Desalination Project none mention the **drive-in drive-out** nature of the VDP.

In particular, Technical Appendix No. 53, "Victorian Desalination Project Traffic Impact Assessment" by Maunsell / AECOM (cover page attached), makes no mention of the **drive-in drive-out** nature of the VDP - this is an appalling shortcoming of the EES process for the VDP, and indicative of the poor quality of the Technical Appendices.

The document:

Environment Effects Act 1978
VICTORIAN DESALINATION PROJECT
ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT
REPORT OF THE INQUIRY
TO:
MINISTER FOR PLANNING
4 December 2008

(cover page attached)

by Planning Panels Victoria, does not mention 'drive-in drive-out' (or anything similar) even though it has transpired that the Victorian Desalination Project can be readily classified as a 'drive-in drive-out' operation.

I request that the Committee question the President of Planning Panels Victoria to determine why there was no consideration of the drive-in drive-out nature of the VDP, in the Report.

The document:

VICTORIAN DESALINATION PROJECT
ASSESSMENT
Under
ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978
Minister for Planning
January 2009

(cover page attached)

by the then Victorian Minister for Planning Justin Madden, does not mention 'drive-in drive-out' (or anything similar) even though it has transpired that the project currently known as the Victorian Desalination Project can be readily classified as a 'drive-in drive-out' operation.

I request that the Committee question Justin Madden to determine why his assessment is so inadequate.

Aquasure / Thiess / Suez / Degremont Environmental Management plan for the Victorian Desalination Project

This plan is available on the website of Aquasure.

An examination and 'search' of the plan reveals no mention of a contingency or planning for the drive-in drive-out nature of the Victorian Desalination Project, being built by the Aquasure / Thiess / Suez / Degremont consortium.

I request that the Committee question the Chief Executive of Aquasure, and the Chief Executive of Thiess, to determine why their Environment Management Plan is so lacking.

Condition of the Bass Highway as a consequence of the nature of the Victorian Desalination Project

There has been much reporting, opinion and discussion of the appalling condition of the Bass Highway, in the local newspapers, The South Gippsland Sentinel Times, The Great Southern Star and the Phillip Island Advertiser.

In addition, there has been much discussion of the condition of the Bass Highway in open sessions of the Bass Coast Shire Council.

The nature of discussions in **closed sessions** of Bass Coast Shire Council, on the condition of the Bass Highway, is unknown to this submitter.

Committee members can experience the condition of the Bass Highway (as a consequence of the drive-in drive-out nature of the Victorian Desalination Project) by navigating this roadway.

Crash statistics in Bass Coast

On 9th September 2011 WIN Television ran a story on a collision at the intersection of Lower Powlett Road and the Bass Highway, with a plea from Victoria Police to desalination plant workers to adjust their driving behaviour.

The Committee can obtain full crash statistics in Bass Coast Shire from Victoria Police.

A critique of the Victorian Desalination Project by the HR Nicholls Society

Attached please find the paper:

VICTORIA : The desalination plant, Wonthaggi.
Is this the way to do business ?

by the HR Nicholls Society.

You will note the claims in the paper of the roting of the living away from home allowance (LAFHA).

I request that the Committee investigate the allegation of 'drive-in drive-out' employees at the Victorian Desalination Plant receiving the LAFHA.

I request that the Committee investigate the matter of the receiving of the remote living away from home allowance when an employee does not live away from home, and which when applied at Wonthaggi is by no stretch of the imagination 'remote'.

Drunkeness in the 'drive-in drive-out' operation that is the Victorian Desalination Project

The enclosed editorial from the Monday, September 26, 2011 edition of the Melbourne Herald Sun, "**Drunks at the desal project**", reveals an alcohol culture at a 'drive-in drive-out' operation.

It is apparent the Victorian Desalination Project has a presence of greed and alcohol driven opportunists, with all the social consequences thereof.

Yours faithfully,

Maurice Schinkel

att.