



Burdekin Shire Council

145 YOUNG STREET, AYR

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Enquiries to: Dan Mulcahy
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12 August, 2002

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture,
 Fisheries and Forestry,
 Parliament House,
 CANBERRA. ACT2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Secretary: *afm***RECEIVED**

19 AUG 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STANDING COMMITTEE ON
 AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES
 AND FORESTRY

Re: Inquiry into Future Water Supplies for Australia's Rural Industries and Communities

I refer to the enquiry into the above and provide the following comments:

1. Council believes that the Commonwealth, in conjunction with the State Government, has the lead role in ensuring the funding of an adequate and sustainable supply of water in rural and regional Australia. Water is the lifeblood of this Nation. Agricultural and business activities resulting from activities that require an adequate and sustainable supply of water, provide employment and create wealth and diversity for the Nation. In addition, if those pursuits are successful, tax income accrues to the Commonwealth and other taxes may accrue to the State Government.

It is important that the Commonwealth (or State Government) takes into consideration that the act of ensuring an adequate and sustainable supply of water is an investment in the Nation and should not be considered as a standard business investment that can be recouped using standard measures as a payback period.

The total benefits of the investment should be taken into account such as tax income, reduced unemployment benefits, additional service industries, and the like.

2. Burdekin Shire is an agricultural area and management of the existing water assets by both the Council and the Water Boards is considered to be sound and is able to take into consideration local aspects and parameters that may not be as readily understood by a distant organisation. The Council strongly supports the district's water assets remaining under local control.
3. A central economic reform of the COAG reforms is the transferability of water allocations. The Council is strongly opposed to this reform. Council considers that there may be detrimental environmental impacts if water allocations are transferred.

I trust that these comments are taken into consideration in the enquiry.

Yours faithfully,

G. J. Webb,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER