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FACSIMILE MESSAGE

DATE: 5/9/05

TO: Committee Secretary

COMPANY: Senate Environment, Communications etc

FAX NO: 02 6277 5818 No OF PAGES: 9

MESSAGE:

Please find letter sent to Minister Hill for the Upper Southeast Drainage Program. In particular the Marcollat Watercourse and the effects it has on the Padthaway Valley.

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FACSIMILE MESSAGEDATE: 19/08/05TO: Minister John HillFax No: 08 8463 5681CC: Mitch WilliamsFax No: 08 8762 1121No OF PAGES: 8**Meeting Held at Prosser's Property on 17/8/05 in relation to the Marcollat Water Course**

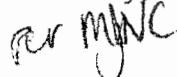
Please find the Minutes of Meeting held on 17/8/04 for the Padthaway Irrigators Group stating the concerns of the Padthaway Irrigators. Please note that it has been admitted that previous decisions to drain to stop peak flows (by building the Nyroca Channel) have led to the many problems we face now with a decreasing water table and increasing salinity levels. Every time a new drain is dug in our area our water table suffers, this will lead to the demise of the multi million dollar industries the Padthaway Valley is renowned for.

Mother Nature is wise and has been telling us for years that she cannot support our interference. We should be listening to her and reversing some of the damage we have done by revegetating, letting water flow and rest where she intended. It is not such a tragedy to have a puddle of water on the ground – not every bit has to be drained.

It has now been discovered over the years that some area's should never been cleared and farmed, good landholders have closed of these areas for the good of the environment and at their own cost (and with a little funding from government sources) have fenced of these areas and revegetated without being instructed to do so, they do it because they are passionate about the land and consider themselves as caretakers for the next generation, these stories are never told.

We admit that in the past bad decisions have been made and the reversal of these is not going to have an effect overnight, but if we don't start now there will be nothing for our children, especially with the impending threat of global warming and lower rainfalls. For the sake of a relatively small area that is affected by salt we need to consider surrounding areas that will be affected by the construction of the drain.

Yours truly,

**Kym Vogelsang**

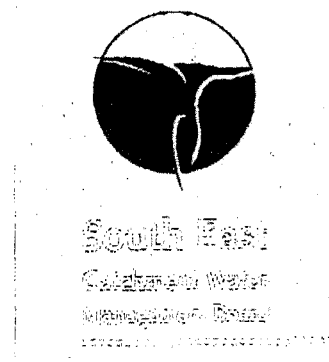
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Rec find: 540/ Mor-07

20th December 2004

Kym Vogelsang
 C/O Padthaway Post Office
 PADTHAWAY SA 5271

Dear Kym,

Re: Morambro issues in your Padthaway submission.

ABN 55 218 900 586

PO Box 30
 Mount Gambier SA 5290
 [Cor Helen & Wehl St]
 Phone [08] 8724 6000
 Fax [08] 8723 2965

Web: www.secatchment.com.au

Thank you for your written submission received 7th July 2004 in response to the call for comments on the Padthaway Proposal Statement. In it you raised a number of issues about Morambro. Consequently, the Board has also incorporated your letter with other submissions received as part of the Board's call for comments on the drafting of the Morambro Creek Water Allocation Plan.

In your letter, you raised the following issues:

- The concept of losing channels, to recharge the aquifer west of the Riddoch Highway using low salinity water from the Nyroca Channel/Morambro Creek.
- The trends in the salinity of the aquifer
- The effects on aquifer salinity of Morambro/ Nyroca water recharges through losing channels.

The comments received by the Board as a result of community consultation were reviewed in a joint working session by the Board and the Morambro Creek Water Allocation Planning committee.

The Morambro Creek water allocation plan is intended to provide policies for the management of the Prescribed Surface Water Area and Watercourse including Cockatoo Lake and Nyroca Channel. Issues related to the management of the Padthaway Groundwater Basin are addressed in the Padthaway (ground) Water Allocation Plan which is currently under review. The interaction between the two plans is important. It is the Board's intention to ensure the provisions of one plan enhance the provisions of the other.

For the Morambro WAP, the Board has sought to meet the requirements of the Act, while providing as much flexibility as possible. The draft WAP provides for water diversions proportional to the flow ie high volumes in high flow years and low volumes in

08 8765 5195

low flow years. The draft Morambro WAP does not prevent activities such as recharge or losing channels. It also allows for carryovers of unused volumes to future water-use years, which is necessary in a stream with flows as variable as Morambro.

The salinity trends of groundwater in the Padthaway valley are of concern. The CSIRO and Departmental salt accession project aims to define the origin and fate of salt. Effective means of managing it can then be established. The Board wishes this to be part of the review and amendment of the Padthaway water allocation plan, currently under way.

Your submission advocates aquifer freshening from Morambro water through losing channels. Early analysis indicates that Morambro water can have a positive but localised effect on groundwater salinity. However, the creek's intermittent nature and small volume relative to the groundwater storage volumes indicate that it can only be one small aspect of sustainable management of the Padthaway groundwater. The draft Morambro WAP now allows for the concept of losing channels. It must be noted that an allocation would be required. It would also be subject to other approvals.

The real challenge in writing the Morambro water allocation plan is finding the right balance. Currently competing interests for water include the balance between the social, economic and environmental demands, existing users versus aspiring users, downstream ecosystems, recharge on the Padthaway flat, recharge for viticulture and future demand for water upstream of the Gap.

The Board feels the balance between these competing interests in the draft Morambro WAP is about right, but is aware that it will not satisfy all.

I trust this addresses the issues raised in your submission and outlines some of the steps being examined to ensure careful management of surface and underground water in the Padthaway area.

Yours sincerely,



Hugo Hopton
Chief Executive Officer

PADTHAWAY IRRIGATORS GROUP

To – Mr Hugo Hopton
CEO
SECWMB
Mt. Gambier

18 Aug 04

Re – Meeting held 17/8 /04 at Padthaway Sporting Complex

Dear Hugo,

After the meeting at which you were present I have been instructed to write to you informing you of two resolutions that the meeting passed for action by your Board. It makes it easier given that you were present but the concerns behind these motions were about being able to get as much fresh water as possible underground in the Padthaway region.

Many points were raised but the most important concept was that it seems imperative that the ground water and surface water authorities speak and work with each other and treat both volumes not as separate entities but as one.

The other critical point from the meeting was that if water can be diverted from areas where it is not needed to high demand sites then it should be done as a matter of urgency instead of it being wasted to the sea.

More precisely talking about the Padthaway area which originally took most of the water from Morambro Creek floods the meeting felt that the seemingly disproportionately high percentage of this that now is to go to the Marcollat Wetlands is way out of order and so the motion was that –

1. The SECWMB reverse the allocation of water from the Morambro Crk. when it flows from 70% to the Marcollat Wetlands and 30% to Padthaway as it currently reads in the Draft Management Plan for the Morambro Crk. to 70% to Padthaway and 30% to the Marcollat Wetlands.

Given that the above motion will still not see enough fresh water going underground to significantly aid desalination the meeting passed the following that-

2. The SECWMB construct a new drain from Drain E (approx 13 km) to meet the Nyroca Channel enabling water to be diverted from Bool Lagoon which could then be used to help alleviate rising salinity in the Padthaway Basin and to avoid this water causing problems further south.

This would assist to reduce fresh water going out to sea unused, which in the driest state in the driest country in the world surely can not be continually let happen.

We would hope that with the new NRM legislation that all water resources in the SE whether they be above or below ground can be integrated for the common good.

Thank you for being present at the meeting and we hope that as a result of these resolutions being put to your board that common sense can at last begin to prevail in the ongoing saga of water in the SE.

We would be grateful of your reply following board discussions so our members know the latest thinking.

Yours Sincerely
David Brown
Secretary
Padthaway Irrigators.

"Gum Gap"
PMB 32
Naracoorte 5271

PADTHAWAY IRRIGATORS (Water Resources Group)

Minutes of Meeting held at Pathaway Sporting Complex – 17/8/04

Apology – Colin Brown

Attending – 24 local irrigators

Special Guests – Hugo Hopton, Kerrin Blott (SEWCMB), Wade Bollinghagen (Fred Stadter replacement)

Purpose – To discuss the seemingly unreasonably low purposed water allocation from the Morambro Crk. to the Padthaway Basin revealed recently in the draft management plan for the Morambro Creek.

President Kym Vogelsang gave a short history of the last 10 years in Padthaway, highlighting water zoning, damming water, prescription of the creek, change in irrigation practices to drip (reinforced by our funded project run here some five years ago). The Nyroca Channel was built by locals to stop flooding but has now been seen to a factor in increasing salinity so maybe we could revert some of this water to the aquifer via soaking channels. Some bores near the drain have gone up approx. 1000ppm over last 10 yrs.

Hugo Hopton –

1. Morambro system is surface water (only prescribed surface water) vs. Padthaway which is ground water and they have been treated differently so far. Genuine need to interconnect the two.
2. Considerations for Morambro Scheme are in order Environmental, Social and Economic last and so with an intermittent flow the water harvesting will be small at best for economic use.
3. There is 1.2m megs. under Padthaway and only 3,500 megs coming down the creek in a good year so the affect if it all went down under would still be small.
4. Water needs to be shared between Marcollat wetlands, Padthaway basin, Viticulture, Existing users and Frances
5. Amount that can be taken depends on creek flow volume ie. Medium (20 megs flow before taking can occur) or Flood (100 megs needed, and then can only take 50%)
6. Drain E contributes 70% of flow out to Marcollat wetlands, so creek water is minor contributor.
7. There is talk since the Morambro Crk Planning has been happening to join the Surface and Ground water organisations which will happen under NRM in 2005

Kerrin Blott

1. Before the channel Padthaway was flooded in wet years but most of water ended up underneath as it ran up to Verco's where the range flattens runs out so what was left could then run west.
2. Marcollat still got enough in those times, so why the seemingly big allocation now- Padthaway should be able to take in a controlled manner!!!

3. L. Cadrite is only 10% of its original size which helps us, and much country over the border has been drained to the creek giving more water. (but many consecutive dry years)
4. The creek is not the answer to Padthaway- we perhaps need to export our salt not bring in more water which also has some salt content although minor.

Wade Bollinghagen - hydrogeologist

The Govt. is now looking at

1. Salting in the Ranges to the east presently
2. Helping with Grapegrowers Salt Accession Programme
3. Will review our research results written up by Cliff Hignett in 2002
4. Questioned why water should go out to sea at all

Other speakers from the floor made the following points

1. Drain E and the creek have only flowed together 4 in 45 years to Marcollat.
2. Rising water table not due to lack of creek water but it helps freshen up trees on the watercourses
3. Wongawilli and Ballater drains are running at 6-7000ppm but were up to 16-18000 ppm so drains have helped out there.
4. Need more Drain E and Drain M (not prescribed yet) water instead of it going out to sea at Beachport - need 15 km of channel to connect with Nyroca Channel
5. Growers who built Nyroca channel should be compensated - remote chance
6. Drain bank has been gradually raised so no water goes to runaway holes now
7. Good compromise to breach the channel in a few spots - but no allocation to do it
8. Water currently running at Nyroca even though creek not running - would be interesting to test this water.
9. Large amount of water disappears from Gap to Dicko's corner presumably underground - this obviously helps Padthaway area
10. Why is Marcollat so VIP vs a huge industry at Padthaway where the water originally flooded anyway (to do with Environmental vs Economic water allocation but should be looked at).
11. Victorians will not be interested in the water as it will be too hard to put underground in that area, and too flat for dams.
12. Big need to connect the ground and surface water under "Environment" because they are both interconnected although not both visible.
13. Access to Dicko's runaway holes would be inexpensive.

Resolutions

1. Applaud Kym Vogelsang for his forward thinking on the concept of the "soak channel" - Terry Brown
2. Make representation to the Catchment Board to reverse the allocation of water to Marcollat and Padthaway as seen in the Morambro Creek Draft plan - that 70% should come to Padthaway and 30% to Marcollat
 Moved - Kevin Hansen seconded - Clive Bryson and then Passed.
ACTION - D. Brown to write to the Catchment Board advising them of this motion

3. Make representation to the Catchment Board that they construct a new drain from Drain E (approx. 13 km) to the Nyroca Channel and divert water from Bool Lagoon to the north.

Moved – Roger Vogelsang seconded – Malcolm McDonald and Passed

ACTION – David Brown to write to the Catchment Board advising them of the motion.

Election of Officers

Kym Vogelsang did not wish to go on and resigned.

David Brown suggested that due to the infrequent meetings that this group become a sub group of the more active Padthaway Grapegrowers who share common irrigation interests. Many grapegrowers have other irrigation interests. Too many local committees. This was discussed but no resolution evolved

No nominations came forward for replacement President so it was resolved that we wait until the AGM of the Padthaway Grapegrowers Com. on 31 Aug 04 where this will an agenda item.

In the meantime the group is in recess

Meeting closed at 10.15 pm

David C. Brown Hon. Sec.