



PEREGIAN OFF THE HOOK AS A DESAL SITE

16 June 2008

Deputy-Premier Paul Lucas has finally confirmed – in writing - that the Queensland Water Commission would no longer consider Peregian as a potential desalination site as it was the least favourable of the six potential sites announced in the draft *South East Queensland Water Strategy*.

“While I’m relieved to finally receive the all clear from the Minister, I am extremely annoyed that once again, residents were subjected to unnecessary worry caused by this Government’s policy of dictating rather than consulting.

“I fully accept that Government’s must make hard decisions and not all of these will be popular but I maintain that for major infrastructure projects that will impact on peoples lives and livelihoods, the process should be to inform, consult and negotiate.

Glen Elmes said that from an engineering or technical perspective, a prospective desalination site requires six main requisites and the only requisite fulfilled by the Peregian site was its proximity to a water source.

“From the beginning, I knew that Peregian should not be considered as it did not meet the criteria yet when I questioned the Minister in Parliament all those months ago, he trivialised the issue by giving me a half-smart and foolhardy response when what was required was a sensible and considered explanation for residents who may have been affected by this proposal.

“The Deputy-Premier should have been aware of what constitutes the parameters for a desalination plant. He should have known that to include Peregian was a nonsense as the only parameter that could be aligned to Peregian was it’s proximity to a water source yet for some perverse reason, he refused to publicly rule it out or to instruct the Commission to rule it out.

Glen Elmes said he was becoming more concerned that the Bligh Government’s approach to major issues was to rule-by-crisis which meant the state was suffering from knee-jerk reactions rather than careful planning and research.

“The worst part of this approach is that communities are being told what’s going to happen rather than being consulted on what the alternatives may be and two prime examples of this are the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam and the forced amalgamation of local councils.

“I’m just pleased at long last that the concerns of the residents of Peregian can be put to rest. It’s just a pity that it’s taken the Labor Government so long to allay their fears,” Glen Elmes said.

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