



Hon Craig Wallace MP
Member for Thuringowa



**Queensland
Government**

Ref CTS 10140/07
M/07/04007

**Minister for Natural Resources
and Water and Minister Assisting
the Premier in North Queensland**

23 OCT 2007

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie 

The Office of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning has forwarded your letter of 7 September 2007 relating to Petition No. 899-07, received by the House on 11 September 2007.

The Petition relates to the proposed construction of desalination plant for the townships of Agnes Water and 1770.

The petition requests the Queensland Government and Miriam Vale Shire to delay the letting out of any contracts for the desalination plant for Agnes Water and 1770 by 7 months, until the matter of water supply solutions can be considered by a democratically elected Gladstone Regional Council.

The selection of the desalination plant as a means of meeting additional water demand for Miriam Vale Shire, one of the critical drought areas in the Wide Bay Burnett region, was based on a water supply assessment by the Miriam Vale Shire Council. For over a decade Miriam Vale Shire Council has been seeking water sources to supply the Agnes Water area. Extensive studies have been carried out by the Council to find a suitable, reliable and viable source of water.

In 2006, a report from Burns Bridge Transactions evaluated several possible options including a pipeline to Gladstone through the Eurimbula National Park, a pipeline to Miriam Vale and Gladstone, and desalination. According to this report, desalination was the most economically viable option. The cost to construct a desalination plant was estimated to be \$24 million while the cost of a pipeline from Awoonga Dam to Agnes Water would range from \$50 million to \$84 million depending on the pipe sizing and staging of the construction. The desalination option offers a practical solution to the problems of limited water supply that the community of Agnes Water is faced with in the longer term.

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The entire project, which also includes a recycling plant and construction of a water and sewerage system to the town of 1770, is estimated to cost \$30 million with \$18 million funding contribution from the State Government. Stage One of the project is due for completion in 2009.

The current serviced population of 1,800 people is expected to increase by about 6.5% based on a medium growth scenario over the next five years. It is estimated that growth in the 1770/Agnes Water region will be in excess of the Shire's average.

Supply for Agnes Water and 1770 is currently sourced from bores and shallow trenches. The water levels of such aquifers have continued to decline over the past few years. In Agnes Water, water restrictions have been in place for a number of years and water carriers have been banned from using the town's water supply. Without this desalination plant, the progress of this region will be significantly hindered and will have serious consequences for development, tourism, employment and lifestyle of the local residents.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Craig Wallace MP
**Minister for Natural Resources and Water and
Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland**