



Hon Craig Wallace MP
Member for Thuringowa



**Queensland
Government**

Ref CTS 11784/07

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

14 DEC 2007

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 1 November 2007, to the Honourable Andrew McNamara MP, Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation, enclosing a copy of Petition No. 936-07 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The petition requests that the House give a guarantee that a thorough, peer-reviewed environmental impact assessment of existing water extraction from North Stradbroke Island is facilitated and completed. The petitioners also seek a Government guarantee that there will be no further consideration of increased water extraction from North Stradbroke Island's groundwater aquifer until existing operations are reviewed, and the existing negative impacts on the Island's water bodies and environment are fully assessed and reversed.

In order to address community concerns about potential long-term impacts of water extraction on North Stradbroke Island, I have announced my intention to prepare an amendment to the *Water Resource (Logan Basin) Plan 2007*, which is subordinate legislation established under the *Water Act 2000*, to incorporate the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. The purpose of this amendment is to provide a management framework for long-term sustainability of the water resources in the Plan area, which includes North Stradbroke Island.

The draft water resource plan amendment will be developed in consideration of issues raised through extensive community consultation, as well as technical and scientific assessment obtained from a range of sources, including hydrological, ecological and socioeconomic assessments.

My Department has engaged an independent Technical Advisory Panel to conduct a scientific assessment of the ecological condition of water bodies and hydrologic systems of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. The first part of this assessment requires the Panel to conduct a thorough assessment of the current condition of these systems under the existing water extraction scenario.

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A Community Reference Panel, representing major stakeholders in the Plan area, has also been formed. The purpose of the Community Reference Panel is to provide advice on the development of the draft amendment plan. The Panel will also have the opportunity to provide input to the technical and scientific assessments.

Before the water resource plan is finalised, a draft water resource plan amendment will be released to provide for broader community consultation on a proposed framework for the sustainable allocation and management of the water resources of the Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

In view of community concerns, the Premier announced on 11 October 2007 that the Environmental Impact Study on the Eastern Pipeline Inter-connector Project should not proceed until alternative water supply options are explored. Also, I intend to proceed with the development of an amendment to the *Water Resource (Logan Basin) Plan 2007*, to provide a framework for long-term sustainability of the water resources of North Stradbroke Island and the other islands of Southern Moreton Bay.

Should you have any further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Bernadette Hogan, Principal Policy Officer, Water Allocation and Planning – South East, of my Department on telephone (07) 3227 6646.

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**