

05.02.08  
The Mayor and all Councillors  
Shire of Yarra Ranges  
Lilydale 3140

Dear Councillors

Re: Food Bowl Modernisation Project  
incorporating the Interconnector Goulburn-Sugarloaf Pipeline

On behalf of the Yarra Glen and District Township Group I want to thank you for attending the public meeting on the Sugarloaf Interconnector Project held in Yarra Glen last Wednesday, January 30. We especially want to acknowledge and thank Councillor Jeanette McRae and the Shire staff who gave so much to ensure that the meeting was a success. It was a pleasure also to welcome the Mayor Councillor Tim Heenan, and Councillors Noel Cliff, Len Cox and Samantha Dunn. This strong representation from Shire Councillors indicates the strong interest and support we in Yarra Glen have from Council and the significance that Councillors place on this major project to the whole Shire.

Those of you at this meeting will have seen the deep concerns expressed by residents of this district on the potential impact of this pipeline to our region of the Shire. As you know, we have been provided with technical information on the pipeline, and members of the planning and construction team have held information sessions in Yarra Glen. Further, our Township Group and a group of landholders in the Dixons Creek and Steels Creek valleys have held discussions with members of the Alliance on specific issues and concerns.

Despite these meetings and discussions, we feel somewhat isolated from the process since no senior people from either Melbourne Water or the Department of Sustainability and Environment (water portfolio) have been available to discuss with us the more important questions relating to policy settings, nor the nature of advice given to those who developed the proposal and policy.

Our Township Group is strongly opposed to the pumping of water from any part of the Goulburn/Murray catchment to Melbourne. It is simply wrong to take water from a parched catchment and transfer it to the city when there are so many other options for creative water management. Furthermore, there is no clear evidence that the resource proposed for Melbourne is in fact available. Dr Chamley, in his address on Wednesday, cast doubt on the validity of the research purporting to prove the resource. The pipeline could be a "white elephant".

We have many questions that remain unanswered, and the people sent out to provide the community with information are simply unable to provide the answers we need. I have written to Premier Brumby, and Minister Tim Holding, but we are making no progress with them. I have strongly supported the need for a full EES. But that is not to be. I have sent a submission to the Federal Minister of the Environment asking him to refuse permission for this pipeline project to be approved. (Copy attached for your perusal)

We now ask the Shire to support our objection to this project on the grounds that it will have major adverse and direimpacts on the social, environmental and economic well-being of the Shire.

We need to know that Council will act in the best interests of our community and also address the policy impacts and local consequences of this poorly thought-out proposal. Council has shown leadership in making a ground-breaking statement of commitment regarding reduction of emissions and also regarding logging in the water catchment areas. We respectfully ask that Council further demonstrate its commitment to our environment and to the wider community by issuing a statement to the State Government and other Local Governments that "Council does not support the construction of the Interconnector Pipeline".

Thank you all for your consideration of this key issue of water management and well being of our local community,  
Yours faithfully, Malcolm Calder, President, Yarra Glen and District Township Group.

*HEWI is a community voice acting to protect and enhance important elements of our local environment*