



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Our reference : LIC10/985 DOC11/57408
Contact : Rachael Chan ☎ 9995 6827

Ms Belinda Scott
Senior Planning Officer
Infrastructure Projects
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Ms Scott

PICTON SEWAGE SCHEME-BOUNDARY EXPANSION (1997-01-15 MOD 3)

I refer to your letter of 10 January 2012 seeking comments on the above proposal. The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has reviewed the Assessment Report (AR) and has identified a key issue which requires clarification prior to the EPA finalising its comments.

As you are aware Sydney Water Corporation (SWC) holds an EPL (No. 10555) under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, for the Picton sewerage treatment system (STS). When the Picton STS was first proposed its planning, operation and management were subject to intensive consideration given the sensitivity of the environment and the potential for negative impacts associated with effluent disposal. Specifically the STS is located in the sensitive upper Nepean catchment and the effluent discharge point is into Stonequarry Creek which is a small creek with highly variable flow.

To address this environmental sensitivity a farm was included as part of the STS so that irrigation to land would account for most of the effluent disposal. A complementary precautionary discharge regime was put in place to manage any discharge to Stonequarry Creek. This regime controlled discharges dependent on flow levels in the creek to ensure a reasonably natural flow regime both in terms of quantity and quality.

It is of key concern to the EPA that the AR does not provide information on whether an increase to the STS collection area would have an impact on the volumes and management of effluent both through the farm and in the effluent storage dams including information about the potential implications for unscheduled precautionary discharges. Over the last two years there have been four unscheduled precautionary discharges and the EPA is concerned that this proposal may increase the risk and frequency of need for these unscheduled discharges. More information is required about this issue.

Given the significance of this omission the EPA requests that this issue be addressed and the AR subsequently be resubmitted for further review.

Should you require further information in this matter, please contact Rachael Chan on 9995 6827.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'FA', followed by the date '29-2-12'.

FRANK GAROFALOW
Manager Infrastructure Biodiversity Regulation
Environment Protection Authority

CC Greg Kane - Sydney Water Corporation