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Att: Belinda Scott
Project Manager
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39, Sydney 2001

Friday 12 October 2012

belinda.scott@planning.nsw.gov.au

SUBMISSION OF OBJECTION
PROJECT No: 10_0235
Macquarie River to Orange pipeline project

Dear Ms Scott,

Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG), based in the Mid-Western Region local government area in NSW, is working for the conservation of our natural heritage and a sustainable future for our children.

MDEG is lodging an objection to the Orange pipeline proposal (the project) because it will have a significant impact on important habitats in the region and on inflows into Burrendong Dam at times of low flow.

The Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) lodged to the Department of Planning does not provide all the appropriate information relating to the project. The EAR has a large number of inadequacies in the assessment methodologies used to conclude that there will not be significant environmental impact.

The justification for the project is based on flawed figures relating to daily demand in Orange. It also does not clarify if water sourced through the pipeline will be onsold to large industries in the region such as Cadia goldmine and other mining proposals.

MDEG is concerned that Orange City Council has indicated to several affected landowners that although the route outlined in the EAR is the preferred route, alternative routes will be investigated with respect to potential cost and constructability.

MDEG requests that the Department of Planning reviews an assessment of all possible pipeline routes and take off points before finalising a decision on the project.

There is particular concern about the instability of the steep slopes that need to be disturbed to construct the pipeline, maintenance road and transmission line on the route assessed in the EA.

The project is likely to have a significant impact on a number of matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) listed under the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC).

These include the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), Trout Cod (*Maccullochella macquariensis*), Murray Cod (*Maccullochella peelii*), and the critically endangered ecological community, Grassy Box Gum Woodland (White Box yellow Box Blakelys Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derives Grassland).

MDEG is greatly concerned that a mitigating biodiversity offset package and management plan has not been identified in the EAR. This must be available for community and independent expert scrutiny before the project can be approved.

MDEG is also objects that Orange City Council has not fully considered all options for securing water supply for the local government area and the central west region. There has not been an inclusive process involving the rate payers in the decision making related to a wide range of water supply and demand management options.

The National Urban Water Management Principles adopted in 2008 are quite specific about consultation with the community to decide on urban water supply issues.

Principle 3: Adopt a partnership approach so that stakeholders are able to make an informed contribution to urban water planning, including consideration of the appropriate supply/demand balance.¹

MDEG objects to this project proposal because it does not meet the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Yours sincerely



Bev Smiles
Chairperson

¹ <http://www.environment.gov.au/water/policy-programs/urban-reform/nuw-planning-principles.html>