

Michael A. Campbell OAM

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14<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Second Submission on the Central Coast Water Pricing Review

Dear Members of IPART (and Ms Livingstone)

Last November in the first round of IPART requesting submissions on the Central Coast Water Pricing Review I forwarded a written submission and also spent more than 15 minutes in camera with IPART and the CC Water Authorities.

The central question, following, was clearly noted in both interactions with IPART;

“I am seeking from IPART clarification of Council’s actual timeframes, location and funding arrangements for a PERMANENT DESALINATION PLANT and also a clear and unambiguous strategy for expenditure on planning and forward estimate costs for desalination ,if any,within this pricing period and that for the (following period)”.

Reminding you that forward planning for this infrastructure was earmarked in Council’s Water Security Plan (2021). I was also tipped off by a Council insider that it was Council’s intention to bring forward this expenditure.

Council also enthused to the NSW Government that 80% of people support Desalination, which itself is a furphy. It was derived from a small group of workshop participants. The people here have never been asked about this forward infrastructure.

Having read your Draft Report 16/3/22 I have seen no reference to my inquiry or any reference at all to a proposed Desal Plant.

We are talking about a \$230 Million infrastructure and at least \$16 Million per annum running costs as outlined by Council.

I do note with concern though that on page 18 of the “Demand for Water Services” section of the report IPART bases drought concerns, and therefore higher water demand based on the year 2050 predictions. That’s 28 years into the future. It is also based upon what CC Water has offered and that they refer to the NARClm report as an “evolving” document.

Page 18 expresses (due to drought).”....this could mean greater infrastructure expansion, greater capital costs over the long term, as well as COSTS POTENTIALLY BROUGHT FORWARD”.

Does IPART mean Permanent Desalination being brought forward, which is the crux of my inquiry? Because at this very point of the report IPART should have addressed my concerns.

IPART have not done their homework. One would expect much more explanation here from a bevy of bureaucrats.

The term..”greater capital costs over the long term”, a throwaway line, refers to just about any water authority in Australia. Where would this not apply?

My concerns have not been addressed by IPART. I have not been contacted in any way as to the omission in the report of my concerns.

Reading IPART’s GOVERNANCE and “Transparency” guidelines I consider that IPART have failed dismally those principles and personally I feel sidelined and cast aside on a major issue of millions of dollars of expenditure..

As an experienced contributor to Senate Inquiries, Planning and Assessment Committees over decades and currently a member of Council’s Catchment Advisory Committee (an OAM recipient and ex-National Serviceman) I am pretty well livid that IPART does not in fact abide by its Transparency or Governance guidelines of interaction with individuals like myself.

IPART should have demanded from Central Coast Council-in-Administration that they make a public statement dismissing concerns about bringing forward expenditure on a permanent Desalination plant or otherwise.

At the very least IPART should have made direct contact with me regarding my inquiry before releasing the Draft Report and explained why my concerns were wholly dismissed.

Does IPART now wish to rectify this by altering the Final Report, exposing Council’s agenda to either bring forward expenditure on desalination or not to. Some explanation is required.

I have already expressed my concerns in media with a lengthy front page lead article in both the Chronicle (northern area) and Coast News (southern area) of 19<sup>th</sup> January. Also my connections with the Grapevine Online service (over 100,000 daily readership).

I await a reply.

Yours sincerely

Michael A. Campbell OAM

