

I wish to oppose the Aquanet Recycled Water Network Expansion – Smithfield to Horsley Park.

I do not believe that this project has been thoroughly investigated in so far as reasonable alternative solutions to provide wastewater to the Nextdc facility in Horsley Park, especially, without the requirement to construct a series of water tanks in essentially a residential area.

Recently our Prime Minister, The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, announced that “Australian standards will set clear rules for large data centres: where they are built – and the power and water they use”. (Wednesday 15 July 2026 The University of Sydney, Sydney)

He referred to a set of expectations for large AI data centres announced by the government on 23 March 2026. One of which was:

Expectation 3 – Sustainable and efficient water usage

Data centres should use **innovative, efficient and sustainable solutions** to minimise water use. They should **engage early** and work proactively with water utilities, communities and First Nations peoples to determine appropriate locations and use secure water sources based on local conditions. They should use efficient cooling technologies, and where possible use non-potable water and apply circular water opportunities.

Which is why the rules referred to by the PM will require data centres to minimise their water use, maximise their energy efficiency, and pay for any additional water infrastructure required.

The project as currently set out is NOT innovative, efficient or sustainable and the entire project would appear to be rushed.

There is nothing innovative or efficient in just pumping water from Smithfield to Horsley Park nor is the project sustainable if the proposed reservoir has to be dismantled in perhaps 10 years time for the proposed new link road.

The residential site selected was in part due to Aquanet being unable to “secure land within the Western Sydney Parklands [which] are subject to a bespoke market process that did not align with the project timeline requirements” (Conexa Reservoir Site Assessment)

It would also appear that the only option canvassed is the pump/reservoir/gravity feed model from Smithfield.

What about:

- Another pumping station (in place of the reservoir) possibly located in Western Sydney Parklands or the closed landfill at Eastern Creek.
- Accessing wastewater from the St Mary’s and/or Quakers Hill plants.
- Accessing wastewater from the Western Sydney Employments Lands. Where does all the water go from all the present and future warehouses?
- Creating a sewage treatment plant for Horsley Park.

I believe that it is unacceptable that a residential site has been chosen for a reservoir when no alternative non-reservoir options were canvassed.

The application also assumes that the area proposed for the reservoirs is on its way to becoming industrial. This is not the case especially when one looks at Appendix J (Visual Impact Assessment) and notes the proximity of existing substantial houses that will be impacted by this. There is also an approved childcare centre directly opposite the proposed site and the Rural Lands Study undertaken by Fairfield Council indicated that this area could in fact move to residential one acre blocks.

It should be noted that the application downplays the significance of the future development of the Southern Link Road (SLR). The proposed reservoir site was due to be acquired for this development because the SLR was designed to go under Walworth Road and required substantial earth batters on the north and south sides.

It is also an unproven assumption that the SLR, which has no access close to Walworth Road, would necessarily lead to an “anticipated long-term transition of the locality from a predominantly rural landscape toward a more infrastructure and employment-related character associated with the broader Western Sydney Employment Area.” (Appendix J – Visual Impact Assessment)

While I can see no merit in the proposal, if it is approved then my suggestions for conditions for the reservoirs are:

- Review compensation requirements due to the lowering of residential land values.
- Dig in to lower the profile of the tanks or alternatively purchase the adjoining property to reduce the height of the tanks.
- Require additional lower plant screening.
- Ensure that any damage to the roads is repaired.
- Ensure that there are no odour issues from the site.
- Ensure that the trees are not “trimmed” by the electricity provider.
- Ensure that there is no undue parking/property access problems associated with the reservoir construction, which does not seem to be specifically covered in the application documents.
- Require access only via Redmayne Road to avoid the school zones at the Horsley Drive / Walworth Road intersection.

In closing, I don’t understand why the residents of Horsley Park are continually the target of proposed projects which provide them with no benefit and that do not align with the existing rural/residential lifestyle of the area. The zoning for the area should always have been R5 - Large Lot Residential rather than RU4 – Primary Production Small Lots. An R5 zoning would mean that this proposal would come under greater scrutiny.