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ADELAIDEAQUA PREFERRED BIDDER FOR DESAL PROJECT

A multi-national consortium, AdelaideAqua has been named as the preferred bidder for construction of Adelaide's new \$1.37 billion desalination plant to be built at Port Stanvac.

The consortium of four companies has extensive world-wide desalination experience and strong environmental credentials.

Premier Mike Rann and Minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald announced the preferred bidder for the project at the Port Stanvac site where they tasted the first glass of desalinated water from the recently completed pilot plant.

For the past six months, the pilot plant has been testing reverse osmosis and pre-treatment technology required for the main 50-gigalitre plant.

The companies comprise Spanish firm Acciona Agua, United Utilities, McConnell Dowell and Abigroup Contractors. Together they will design, build, operate and maintain the plant for 20 years, subject to major development approval.

Premier Mike Rann says AdelaideAqua was selected after a competitive and comprehensive evaluation process was undertaken by SA Water - with three short-listed groups.

"After rigorous assessment against hundreds of environmental, technical, financial, legal and social criteria, AdelaideAqua has emerged as the consortia best placed to deliver this critical infrastructure for our State," he said.

"It was crucial we select a preferred bidder as soon as possible to allow detailed design and procurement of long lead items to begin.

"AdelaideAqua will now progress with the detailed design work and procurement of critical long lead items for the works to ensure first water can be delivered in December 2010.

"The plant will provide Adelaide with one-quarter of its annual water use and is a climate-independent source, giving us the insurance we need against future climate variability. It will be powered using sustainable energy sources."

AdelaideAqua's bid includes:

- A pre-treatment process that will provide high levels of reliability, less energy use and reduced need for chemicals.
- A highly efficient reverse osmosis design, which is an Australian benchmark that will mean more efficient use of the seawater extracted, significant energy savings and a smaller plant footprint.

- An innovative diffuser for the saline concentrate that will ensure adequate mixing back into the marine environment and meet the specified Environmental performance criteria

Minister Maywald says the consortium's approach to marine and environmental works required for the project was crucial during negotiations.

“Each of the entities involved in AdelaideAqua has demonstrated strong environmental credentials and commitments. The State Government has a strong commitment that we will not compromise the health of the Gulf St Vincent through this project.

“Acciona Agua has won numerous awards for its desalination work, while Abigroup, McConnell Dowell and United Utilities have won numerous awards for environmental and engineering excellence in a range of construction projects.

“The companies involved in the AdelaideAqua consortium have significant experience in constructing and operating desalination plants around the world, in particular in the application of leading edge reverse osmosis technology.

“We have said from the start we do not want to compromise the environment and we are confident the approach proposed by AdelaideAqua will ensure we have a plant designed, built and operated with maximum environmental efficiency.

“The AdelaideAqua team includes environmental specialists, and comprehensive environmental management plans will be in place throughout each phase of the project to ensure our stringent compliance requirements are met.

“I congratulate AdelaideAqua, SA Water and the project's specialist advisers for undertaking these negotiations with the highest levels of probity and professionalism, particularly under such tight timelines.

About AdelaideAqua

AdelaideAqua includes two joint ventures: one, between Acciona Agua, McConnell Dowell Constructors and Abigroup Contractors to undertake the design and construction of the desalination plant and two, between Acciona Agua and United Utilities Australia to undertake the operation and maintenance of the plant.

- **Acciona Agua** has 2000 employees who construct, manage and operate water plants and services to meet the needs of more than 50 million people in 20 countries around the world. Acciona Agua has substantial overseas experience in the delivery of reverse osmosis desalination plants, including:
 - The largest plant in Europe and the second largest in the world (Torrevieja, Spain, 240 million litres a day)
 - The two largest desalination plants in the United States (Carlsbad, 204 million litres a day and Tampa 108 million litres a day)
 - The largest desalination plant in the United Kingdom (Thames Gateway, 150 million litres a day)

- **McConnell Dowell Constructors** is a specialist engineering, construction and maintenance company focused on civil and marine pipelines, mechanical, electrical and tunnelling projects.
- **Abigroup Contractors** is a leading construction, engineering and contractor organisation with more than 45 years' experience. In addition to the delivery of a number of major projects in the health, education and entertainment sectors, it also has an established national water infrastructure delivery business.
- **United Utilities Australia** specialises in providing services for publicly-owned water utilities, including the Riverland Water and Victor Harbor projects in South Australia, majority of the Coliban Water assets, the Victorian Super Pipe Project and the LinkWater Alliance in Queensland. Its head office is in Adelaide.