

Thursday, December 4, 2008

### **LONG-TERM EP WATER SECURITY PLAN RELEASED**

The State Government will spend \$500,000 over the next 12 months on strategies that will secure Eyre Peninsula's long-term water supply, including investigating the feasibility of desalination.

The strategies are outlined in the Eyre Peninsula's new long-term water security plan, to be launched in Port Lincoln today by Minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald.

The plan, titled *Meeting Future Demand – SA Water's Long Term Plan for Eyre Region*, outlines what action will be taken to ensure the EP has sufficient supplies to meet increases in demand for the next 25 years and beyond.

The plan says that by November 2009, SA Water will:

- Investigate the feasibility of desalination on the lower West Coast or further along near Ceduna or Penong and compare with Stage 2 of the Iron Knob to Kimba pipeline to take water from Lock to Ceduna via the west coast main.
- Investigate abandoned water harvesting scheme sites to determine future ownership and management options.
- Undertake commercial discussions with the District Council of Elliston regarding water supplies for Venus Bay and Port Kenny.
- Continue investigations into the extent of the underground water at Coffin Bay and review the augmentation charge for land developments.
- Research initiatives to improve water quality and discuss practical options with communities.
- Approach the Lower Eyre and Tumby Bay district councils regarding a potential strategy to allow public access to the Tod Reservoir.

“While Stage 2 of the Iron Knob to Kimba pipeline has been identified as the most cost-effective option to increase the supply, desalination appears to be more favourable when it comes to the ability to produce a new source of non-climate dependent water,” Minister Maywald said.

“SA Water will work with industry and businesses to produce water efficiency plans to reduce consumption and, with industry support, will look to modify its wastewater treatment plant into high saline and lower saline streams to better manage waste disposal from the fish processing industry.”

The plan outlines key triggers that could impact the EP's future water security including sudden increases in population, increases in rural and township demand, decreases in water allocation from the southern groundwater basins and the effects of climate change.

“Projections on future water demand show the region will require a new source in 2014-15 based on medium growth in demand, or by 2011-12 based on a high growth in demand,” she said.

“A thorough annual review will occur as part of the plan in which projections for water demand and factors which may impact water security will be monitored and reports provided to the Eyre Peninsula Water Security Reference Group.”

Minister Maywald says the recent changing conditions of the Poldia Basin groundwater resource is a prime example of why it is important to plan for the impacts of climate change and reduced rainfall and inflows.

“We need to be prepared to deal with the current extreme drought, and the long-term impacts of climate change and as a result, an addendum has been added to the EP plan regarding groundwater resource monitoring.

“The EP NRM Board is leading a \$1.5 million project on groundwater allocation, planning and management in partnership with SA Water and the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation that will provide important information on the sustainability of groundwater resources and impacts of the drought.

“This research will be used in the 2009 review process for the plan and will be critical as we move forward into uncharted territory as drought and climate change re-shape our natural environment.”

Minister Maywald praised the EP Water Security Reference Group and the community for their assistance in developing the plan.

Members of the group included SA Water, the EP NRM Board, the Eyre Regional Development, the Water Resources Advisory Committee, DWLBC, the Local Government Association and all EP councils.

“Community engagement has been an integral part of the long-term planning process, with a number of sessions, forums and opportunities for comment included in the process,” she said.

“This has resulted in the Eyre Peninsula community having significant input into, and providing their endorsement, for the plan.

“The development of Eyre Peninsula’s plan for water security is the first in a series designed to ‘water proof’ South Australia.”

The Eyre Peninsula Long Term Water Security Plan is available at [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au).

## **EP LONG-TERM PLAN TIMELINE**

**March 2007:** Minister Maywald hosts the EP Water Summit in Port Lincoln to identify community concerns regarding Eyre Peninsula's water resources. At the meeting, she committed SA Water to a comprehensive review of its 2003 Master Plan and the development of a new long term plan that would consider possible demand and supply scenarios for the next 25 years.

**August 2007:** An extensive community consultation program offers the opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations proposed for the Eyre region. About 15,000 invitations were sent to EP property owners and 19 information sessions were held in 13 towns.

**August 2007:** The Eyre Peninsula Water Security Reference Group was formed including representatives of the EP NRM Board, the Eyre Regional Development Board, the Water Resources Advisory Committee, SA Water, the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and the Local Government Association and all EP councils. These groups supported and endorsed the plan.

**June 2008:** A draft plan is released for community comment.

**October 2008:** The Eyre Peninsula Water Security Reference Group endorsed the Eyre Peninsula long term plan.

**December 2008:** *Meeting Future Demand – SA Water's Long Term Plan for Eyre Region* is launched by the Minister in Port Lincoln.