



Our ref: CORP F2023/000158
Receipt No: 17497382

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17 April 2023

The Hon Nicola Centofanti MLC
Member of the Legislative Council
Parliament House
ADELAIDE SA 5000

Dear Ms Centofanti

Determination under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*

I refer to your application made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* which was received by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA) on 10 March 2023, seeking access to the following:

"A copy of all documents (including but not limited to hard copy or electronic briefings, minutes, reports, emails, letters (including draft versions), meeting agendas, diary entries, event attendance records and any other correspondence) regarding a desalination plant on the Eyre Peninsula, between 1 January 2023 and 10 March 2023 (inclusive)."

On 16 March 2023, it was confirmed that your application is referring to a desalination plant at Port Lincoln.

Contact was made with your office by PIRSA's Senior Freedom of Information Advisor on 17 March 2023 seeking to narrow the scope of your application.

On 23 March 2023, it was confirmed that the scope of your request was revised to briefings only, amending your application as follows:

"A copy of all briefings regarding a desalination plant at Port Lincoln, between 1 January 2023 and 10 March 2023 (inclusive)."

Your application was placed on hold for a period of six days awaiting receipt of your response. Accordingly, the new determination due date is 17 April 2023.

The following determination has been finalised.

I have located six documents that are captured within the scope of your request.

Determination 1

I have determined that access to the following documents is **granted in full**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
1	Minute from Chief Executive, PIRSA to Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development dated 13/1/2023 re meeting with Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association	4
1a	Attachment to Document 1 - Minute from Chief Executive, PIRSA to Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development dated 2/8/2022 re meeting request – Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee	3
5	SA Water Talking Points – Eyre Peninsula Desalination Project	5

The information removed from Document 1 is outside of the scope of your request.

Determination 2

I have determined that access to the following document is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
4	Cabinet Submission dated 17/2/2023	17

Access to the above document is refused pursuant to Clause 1(1)(c) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act which states:

“1 – Cabinet documents

(1) A document is an exempt document –

(c) if it is a document that is a copy of or part of, or contains an extract from, a document referred to in paragraph (a) or (b);”

The document consists of a copy of a Cabinet Submission (whether or not it had been submitted to Cabinet).

Determination 3

I have determined that access to the following document is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
3	Document dated 22/2/2023 re Cabinet matter	1

Access to the above document is refused pursuant to Clause 1(1)(e) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act which states:

"1 – Cabinet documents

(1) A document is an exempt document –

(e) if it contains matter the disclosure of which would disclose information concerning any deliberation or decision of Cabinet;"

Disclosure of this document would reveal detail of a matter considered in Cabinet.

Determination 4

I have determined that access to the following document is **refused**:

Doc No.	Description of document	No. of Pages
2	Parliamentary Briefing Note dated 1/2/2023	2

Access to the above document is refused pursuant to Clause 17(c) of Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act which states:

"17 – Documents subject to contempt etc

A document is an exempt document if it contains matter the public disclosure of which would, but for any immunity of the Crown –

(c) infringe the privilege of Parliament."

The document consists of a briefing note which was specifically prepared for the purpose of use in proceedings in Parliament. Disclosure of this information would infringe the privilege of Parliament.

If you are dissatisfied with this determination, you are entitled to exercise your right of review and appeal as outlined in the attached documentation <https://archives.sa.gov.au/finding-information/information-held-sa-government/making-freedom-information-application#Review>, by completing the "FOI Application Form for Internal Review of a Determination" and returning the completed form to:

Freedom of Information Principal Officer
Department of Primary Industries and Regions
GPO Box 1671
ADELAIDE SA 5001

or via email PIRSA.FOI@sa.gov.au

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your application, and the documents to which you are given access, will be published in PIRSA's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at http://dpc.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/20818/PC045-Disclosure-Log-Policy.pdf

If you disagree with publication, please advise the undersigned in writing within fourteen calendar days from the date of this determination.

Should you require further information or clarification with respect to this matter, please contact Ms Lisa Farley, Senior Freedom of Information Advisor on 8429 0422 or email PIRSA.FOI@sa.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Griffiths', is positioned above the printed name.

Michelle Griffiths

Accredited Freedom of Information Officer
DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS



Minute to
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

Ref: eA198693

MINISTER'S
OFFICE

13 JAN 2023

RECEIVED

For	Noting
Critical Date	18 January 2023 (date of meeting)
Subject	Meeting with Mr Brian Jeffriess, CEO Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA)

Synopsis

You are meeting with Mr Brian Jeffriess, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Southern Bluefin Tuna Industry Association (ASBTIA) on 18 January 2023. Your office has requested a brief on matters that may be discussed.

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the brief
NOTED

mtg held 18.1.2023
-RC-

.....
Hon Clare Scriven MLC
**Minister for Primary Industries
and Regional Development**
Minister for Forest Industries

/ / 2023

Ministerial Comments -

Background

- Out of scope

-

-

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Discussion

Out of scope

- Out of scope

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Out of scope

Other Potential Topics include:

Out of scope

- Out of scope

-

-

-

Desalination Plant proposal – Port Lincoln

- Security of regional water supplies is a key priority for SA Water and existing water supplies for regional communities on Eyre Peninsula need to be supplemented to ensure future proofing. To achieve this, SA Water proposed to build a desalination plant in Boston Bay, Port Lincoln. Due to the reduced flushing of the inshore regions of Boston, Proper and Louth Bay's, and its proximity to co-located fisheries and aquaculture industries and the Port Lincoln community, there is uncertainty in the regions capacity to adequately disperse brine outfall from a desalination plant.
- Mr Jeffries is a member of the Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee which has identified and narrowed down site location to three options: Sleaford West; Sleaford North; or Point Boston. You received a brief on this matter (**Attachment C**).

Stakeholder / regional impacts, consultation and engagement

- Nil

Management of key risks

- Nil

Legislative and/or financial implications

- Out of scope

Attachments

- A. Out of scope
- B. Out of scope
- C. Minute - TRELOAR, Peter Eyre Peninsula Desalination Site Selection Committee July 2022 - Signed by Minister



for
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Department of Primary Industries and Regions

13/1/2023

CONTACT	Benn Gramola
POSITION	A/Executive Director
DIVISION	Fisheries and Aquaculture
MOBILE and LANDLINE	0427 603 167
Cleared by	Dr Shane Roberts, General Manager, Aquaculture

Minute to
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

Ref: eA197625

MINISTER'S
OFFICE

02 AUG 2022

RECEIVED

For	Noting
Critical Date	Nil
Subject	Meeting request from Peter Treloar, Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee

Synopsis

Mr Peter Treloar, Chair, Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee, has requested a meeting with you to discuss a viable site option for the proposed desalination plan. Your office has requested a briefing to inform scheduling of a potential meeting.

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the brief about the proposed desalination plant.

NOTED

Hon Clare Scriyen MLC

**Minister for Primary Industries
and Regional Development****Minister for Forest Industries**

24/ 8 / 2022

Ministerial Comments -

Background

- Mr Peter Treloar, Independent Chair, Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee (Committee), has written to request you meet with him and Mr Brad Flaherty, Mayor of the Port Lincoln City Council, and Chair of the (Committee's) Funding Sub-Committee.
- The role of the Committee is to find a viable alternative site to that proposed in late 2021 by SA Water. The Committee is intending to finalise its recommendations to SA Water by early August 2022.
- It appears Mr Treloar is seeing to meet with you in your role as Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development prior to finalising its recommendation.
- This briefing has been prepared to assist with informing whether a meeting should be scheduled.

Discussion

- It was identified in 2009 that the Eyre Peninsula (EP) was in need of a secure, alternative water sources from existing provisions, particularly from the Uley Basin, and the River Murray. It has been forecast that the Uley Basin, which supplies approximately 75% of water to the lower Eyre Peninsula would be depleted by 2024.
- In 2018 SA Water announced a preferred site at Sleaford, to build a desalination plant to supply water to Port Lincoln and lower Eyre Peninsula, based on an urgent need to address water security for the region. Project costs for a new desalination plant at Sleaford were identified to be around \$90 million.
- Following additional costings, SA Water identified that the previously selected site was cost prohibitive and an alternative preferred site was announced in 2021 at the Slipway, Port Lincoln (also referred to as Billy Light's Point).
- Community concerns were raised, including a number of campaigns and protests during October and November 2021. The aquaculture and fishing industries were concerned about the environmental impacts on production, in particular given the lack of tidal flushing in the area.
- In November 2021 the State Government announced that the project would be put on hold for twelve months to allow time for more investigation and consultation with local community and businesses. SA Water continues to undertake work, including studies and modelling on water flows in the marine environment, to inform the decision making process.
- SA Water engaged SARDI to undertake a 15 month project to investigate modelling of brine dispersion at proposed sites. PIRSA through SARDI has provided preliminary modelling and monitoring for Billie Light's Point, Point Boston and Cape Dinington to the Site Selection Committee.
- A new proposal was presented, increasing the costs of the project to \$150 million, although it has been speculated that this funding will not fully deliver the project given price rises, as well as geographically challenging issues, and logistics.
- Since this time, the community has established the Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee, chaired independently by Peter Treloar (former Member for Flinders), supported by SA Water, and with representation from key stakeholders from the Lower Eyre Peninsula. A copy of the Terms of Reference for this Committee is provided as Attachment A.

- The Committee has identified and narrowed down site location to three options: Sleaford West; Sleaford North; or Point Boston.
- There is concern in the community that final site location will be chosen with disregard of community input and alternative options, based on costs and available funding sources.
- As noted in briefing eA197603, the Slipway forms part of a larger strategic objective, which needs to be considered by the State Government prior to any final decisions being made as the preferred desalination plant location.

Stakeholder / regional impacts, consultation, and engagement

- There is significant community concern regarding impacts, particularly within the seafood industry.

Management of key risks


- PIRSA is not aware of a Regional Impact Assessment Statement for the desalination plant project.

Legislative and/or financial implications

- Funding of \$150 million has been committed by the Government of South Australia.

Attachments

- A. EP Desalination Plant Site Selection Committee Terms of Reference.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

2/8/2022

CONTACT	Peta Crewe
POSITION	General Manager, Regions
DIVISION	Industry and Regional Development
MOBILE and LANDLINE	0427 012 510
Cleared by	Executive Director, Industry & Regional Development

Key messages:

- The expert environmental and economic analysis is clear – a desalination plant at Billy Lights Point is the only cost-effective water security solution for the people of the Eyre Peninsula.
- This site reduces technical and environmental challenges and achieves a better customer outcome to provide climate independent drinking water security and supply to the broader Eyre Peninsula.
- SA Water have successfully operated the Adelaide Desalination Plant since 2011 with no negative environmental impacts, and their expertise in operating 10 desalination plants around the state will again be demonstrated at Billy Lights Point.
- Once plans are finalised and appropriate approvals are received, we will be looking for as many locals as possible to be involved in the construction, operation, and maintenance of this new facility. That's estimated to be up to 230 jobs.
- We sincerely thank the people of the Eyre Peninsula for their contributions to the extensive consultation process to date, and will ensure that the local community continues to be engaged and informed about this important infrastructure project.
- Water security has been a growing concern for Eyre Peninsula communities and this decision will give surety to the residents and allow businesses to invest with confidence.
- Up-to-date project information can be found at **watertalks.sawater.com.au/getthefacts**

Background

Location

- Billy Lights Point is the best option for the people of Eyre Peninsula – it's the quickest solution to ensure water security to the Eyre Peninsula, with the most minimal impact on future water costs for customers and according to the scientific evidence the safest option to preserve the marine and coastal environments.
- The preferred location for the above ground infrastructure is the ex-BHP site at Billy Lights Point. This site reduces the technical and environmental challenges and achieves a better customer outcome to provide water security, ensure water quality and supply to the region.

- This site also has a shorter powerline route at four kilometres compared to 14 kilometres at Sleaford Bay. It requires a shorter transfer main at 7.4 kilometres compared to 18 kilometres at Sleaford Bay.
- Billy Lights Point does not restrict future plant expansion opportunities. It has a larger available footprint which is advantageous for a buffer zone between the site and nearby residential development.
- It has reduced marine works costs due to lower constructability risks compared to Sleaford Bay.
- Marine and terrestrial challenges at Sleaford Bay included the physical conditions of the seabed, the hardness and strength of the rock which would require excessive excavation and drilling costs, constraints from the nearby whale aggregation zone, wave height and tidal movement impacting on infrastructure assets project costs.

Environment

- Expert environmental studies confirm there will be minimal impact on the marine environment.
- The location for the above ground infrastructure encompasses parts of the former-BHP industrial site and provides an opportunity to restore and rehabilitate the marine and land environments.
- SA Water will map native habitats and optimise construction and operations to minimise further impact. Flora and fauna assessments will be undertaken, and we will work with the regulatory agencies throughout assessment, construction, and operation.
- We are recognised as a leader in environmental management, by adopting and integrating sustainable practices, including goals to achieve net zero waste and net zero emissions across our network, and we take our responsibility seriously to minimise any impact on local environments through our operations.
- The Environment Protection Authority also acknowledges our successful management of the local marine environment surrounding the Adelaide Desalination Plant, which has had no negative impact on the existing marine environment since it began operation in 2011.

Science

- Without a desalination plant, there will likely be permanent damage to the Uley South Basin, the last remaining major productive groundwater source on the Eyre Peninsula.

- The desalination plant at Billy Light's Point is the quickest solution to ensure water security to the region, with the most minimal impact on future water costs for customers.
- With the right engineering design, the science indicates that a desalination plant at Billy Lights Point can be built without impacting our important marine and coastal environments.
- The report shows predicted changes in salinity due to the discharge of saline concentrate from the plant are within the natural salinity variability of the bay system.
- It also indicated that less than 0.1 per cent of mussel larvae are at risk of entrainment by the plant's intake (where it draws seawater in).

Funding

- The final cost of the desalination plant and supporting infrastructure will be confirmed through the procurement process.
- Based on preliminary designs, the capital cost estimates for the Sleaford West and Point Boston sites are economically unfeasible. This is largely due to the construction of additional piping to transport water from the plant to the community.
- We were open to progress with the Site Selection Committee's preferred outcome and investigated its feasibility, however the Committee was unable to confirm a viable, timely funding pathway.
- A Funding Working Group and the independent Site Selection Committee have both explored additional funding opportunities and determined this process would be unlikely to succeed and would further delay Eyre Peninsula's critical water security needs.
- Any increase in cost would need to be paid by SA Water's broader customer base.

Process

- Our process for determining a preferred site for the desalination plant sought to minimise impact on the marine and terrestrial environments, meet social and cultural priorities, and enable cost-effective construction and operation.
- Through a multi criteria analysis process, a shortlist of potential sites was developed. Based on the information available and expert input from key stakeholders, six locations were considered suitable and recommended for further consideration as the preferred location for a seawater desalination plant.

- Shortlisted alternative sites were assessed against a range of factors including distance from existing water, power and telecommunications networks, geological and marine conditions, and cost.

Site Selection Committee and community engagement

- We paused the project for 12 months to allow an independent site selection committee to undertake an additional assessment.
- This committee included a broad range of representatives from the local community. The process was a culmination of more than 20-years of community engagement on this issue.
- We continue to listen to the community and although the Committee's recommendation was not viable, we considered each issue raised and this has helped to inform our environmental protection initiatives.
- We were open to progress with the Site Selection Committee's preferred outcome and investigated its feasibility, however the Committee was unable to confirm a viable funding pathway within a suitable timeframe.
- Engagement with the community has included:
 - Community information sessions and forums.
 - In addition, a Reference Group was formed with representatives from:
 - 11 Eyre Peninsula councils.
 - The then Department for Environment, Water and Natural Resources.
 - The then Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board.
 - Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula.
 - Throughout 2021 we have been working with local traditional owners.
 - Industry, communities, landholders, and interest groups.

Timeline

2008

- SA Water's Long-Term Plan for the Eyre region endorsed.

2020

- Locations for desalination plant investigated.

2021

- Billy Lights Point site selected for desalination plant.

2022

- Independent site selection committee established to investigate alternative sites, with Billy Lights Point as a base case.
- Alternative site west of Sleaford Bay recommended by the committee.
- Detailed site investigations identified challenges with Sleaford Bay site, including cost.
- Funding committee could not identify additional funding pathway for Sleaford Bay.
- Marine Science Review Panel reports plant at Billy Lights Point can operate with minimal impacts on the environment.

2023

- Billy Lights Point selected as preferred location for desalination plant.
- Further scientific research to inform detailed designs and location of intake and outfall pipes.
- Community engagement to support detailed design.
- Project to go through various approval and regulatory processes.

2024

- Subject to required approvals, construction of the new desalination plant is expected to begin in mid-2024.

2025

- First water expected to be delivered from 2025.