



HON NICK GRIFFITHS LLB MLC
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING;
GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISES;
GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE



12 MAY 2003

Our Ref: 006863

Ms M Betjeman
Clerk Assistant
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Betjeman

Thank you for your letter of 14 April 2003 regarding the report on the Petition Objecting to the Proposal to Establish a Sewerage Pump Station in Heseltine Park, Busselton. I have discussed this matter with the Managing Director of the Water Corporation and the following responses are provided to Recommendations 1-7.

Response to Recommendation 1

The Corporation considers that from a technical, economic and community viewpoint, the Heseltine Park site is the only suitable location for the proposed pump station.

Response to Recommendation 2

The Corporation considers that due to technical, cost and social constraints Lot 95 Blue Crescent is not the most suitable location for the pump station. Also, the owners of the adjacent private dwellings have strongly objected to the location of the pump station on that lot.

Response to Recommendation 3

The valuations used in the Corporation's discussions for the purchase of Lot 95 Blue Crescent were current at the time and provided by two licensed independent valuers. Whenever valuations are more than six months old the Corporation requests revised valuations as a matter of practice. Although there may be a sale price on a property, this does not mean that the price is the "market value" of the property.

As with many negotiations with private landowners the Corporation is in a position of attempting to buy land that may not be for sale. In such circumstances, some owners place unrealistic prices on the land knowing that the Corporation is the purchaser and it is then not always possible to reach agreement. The Corporation then has two options, either find an alternative site or consider compulsory acquisition of the land if no alternative site exists.

Lot 95 Blue Crescent is not the most suitable for siting the pump station consequently the Corporation considers that there is little to be gained by continuing negotiations with the property owner.

Response to Recommendation 4

The Corporation is required under the *Water Corporation Act* to operate on a commercial basis in its dealings. The recommendation that the Corporation goes outside its normal purchasing guidelines is at odds with the Corporation's legislation.

Such a course of action would also create a number of precedents in terms of the Corporation's policies and guidelines that would be difficult to justify to the Corporation's Board and Auditors.

While in this instance the Corporation does not intend to site a pump station on Lot 95 Blue Crescent, it would not be appropriate to go outside its land purchasing guidelines to facilitate such a purchase.

Response to Recommendation 5

Not applicable as the Corporation does not intend to site the plant on Lot 95 Blue Crescent.

In any case it is standard practice of the Corporation to construct sewerage pump stations that are thoroughly sound proofed and include odour control technology and procedures of the highest standard possible to ensure that the affect on the amenity of all adjacent property owners is kept to a minimum.

Response to Recommendation 6

Not applicable as the Corporation does not intend to site the pump station on Lot 95 Blue Crescent.

Response to Recommendation 7

Public Open Space (POS) is often used for the siting of pump stations by the Corporation particularly where schemes are provided as part of the Infill Sewerage Program.

There are a number of reasons for this as follows:

- There are often very limited options for the siting of pump stations in developed urban areas and POS is often one of the few options available.
- There are usually few, if any, objections to this approach because the POS forms a natural buffer between the facilities and any nearby residential lots.
- Alternatives to the use of POS often require pump stations to be located directly adjacent to residential housing, which can create some concern amongst the neighbours.
- The costs associated with the acquisition of land other than POS is usually significantly more than for POS and is an uneconomical use of the limited available funding for the Infill Sewerage Program. The cost of a project can be significantly increased by such acquisitions.

- By siting on POS, the construction of the largest single item of infrastructure, being the pump station, is kept as far as possible from nearby residential housing. This minimises the disturbance to residents from prolonged construction work, which may require the availability of adequate working space to facilitate ground excavation of up to 8-metres in depth for a conventional pumping station. This option is generally not available on a conventionally sized lot in the midst of residential properties.
- A normal conventional wastewater pump station generally comprises of a below ground concrete structure, a bitumenised hard-stand area for maintenance vehicles and a 1.5 metre high above ground stainless steel electrical cabinet, the size of a small cupboard. The bottom of this type of pump station is in most cases approximately 8 metres deep.
- In the case of a vacuum pump station, the above ground building is generally slightly larger than the average public open space toilet block but far more aesthetic in design and professionally landscaped.

Yours sincerely



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