

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON CLYDE RIVER WATER MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON WEDNESDAY 11 AUGUST 2004.

Mr CRAIG WOODFIELD, TASMANIAN CONSERVATION TRUST, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Mr Woodfield, we have a very brief note from Mr Lynch in regard to your written submission. So I will ask you to add to that submission, if you would, please.

Mr WOODFIELD - Thank you, Mr Chairman, it is a brief submission and I think it has very clearly laid out our concerns and the issues. My reason for appearing before you today is basically if you wanted to ask any questions about the content of that submission or if I can add any further information. Our principal concern with the Clyde is the Water Management Plan for both the lakes and for the Clyde River itself, which is relevant in some ways to this inquiry but not the sole purpose of the inquiry.

Mr WILKINSON - One of the problems, Craig, that has been stated is concerns the take of water in the winter period, the months where the irrigators, the ones with the dams, are able to fill their dams. Have you anything to say in relation to that?

Mr WOODFIELD - As I said our chief concern is the water management plan. As I am sure you know, there have been two years and over 20 meetings and a lot of consultation went into the production of that plan. We certainly would not want to recommend or comment on anything that goes outside the recommendations of that plan. When it is finalised I am sure it will take into account, because of the long period of consultation, all these concerns and will deliver a result which is the best result for the environment and for the stakeholders.

Mr WILKINSON - So you are saying, are you, that this committee should not come down with a decision prior to the release of the water management plan?

Mr WOODFIELD - No, I am saying that the water management plan should deal with the issues primarily to do with the release of water from the lakes and the water management plan for the river. The committee, I understand, will be dealing with issues as to the allocation of water, and that is something which is I freely admit outside our expertise and indeed our interests. We are concerned with the adoption of the water management plan for the lakes and for the river and for the environmental health of the region.

Mr WILKINSON - But one of the matters may be that the water management plan might - and I do not know what they are going to say - say there can be more than 10 000 megalitres taken out of the lake.

Mr WOODFIELD - It is not my understanding that that is what it will recommend, but if it does recommend that then I am sure there will be very good reasons for that and any

party, including the trust or any of the irrigators or any other person for that matter, will have their right of appeal and can challenge that decision and take it to an independent appeal and it will be heard before an independent body.

Mr WILKINSON - Are you aware when the report is going to become public?

Mr WOODFIELD - Our understanding is that it was going to be released about this time last year. The latest information I have that it is to be finalised before the end of the year. We would be very encouraging of that; it has been over two years, there has been a lot of consultation and a lot of very good work done and I am sure the result they will come up with will be a good balance between the needs of irrigators and the environment and the community. I would hope it comes out as soon as possible.

Mr FLETCHER - The substance of your report will leave no element of doubt that you are saying the committee should not see its role as a review body of the water management plan. That is the substance of what you are saying, isn't it? I accept that.

Mr WOODFIELD - Sure. I think rarely do we see a consultation process which takes so long and gives so much capacity to people to contribute to it as we have with the Clyde, and I commend the department and the members of the consultative committee for that.

CHAIR - I just mention other matters incidental here to to examine the administration of other irrigation schemes, for example, the South East Irrigation Scheme. Do you have any knowledge of the way that they operate?

Mr WOODFIELD - Only superficial knowledge. It seems to be a relatively stable system that all of the irrigators have entered into and the allocations seem to be accepted by all parties. The administration of that by the Rivers and Waters Supply Commission seems to work. It is effectively outside the interests of the trust but certainly on the surface - though this committee may turn up evidence to the contrary - it seems to work quite well and that is in the interests of everybody including the environment.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.