

## Question on Notice

No. 539

Asked on Thursday 17 April 2008

**Mr Elmes** asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning (Mr LUCAS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to pages 87 and 90 in the GHD report 'SEQ Regional Desalination Plant Siting Study, Investigation and Preliminary Ranking of Sites' dated December 2007 that shows Peregian was ranked sixth on the list and to the Queensland Water Commission Report 'Securing our water together water for today, water for tomorrow South East Queensland Water Strategy Draft' dated March 2008 where Peregian is not mentioned and given there is a great deal of concern in the community as to whether or not Peregian remains as an option for a desalination plant –

Will he advise if Peregian has now been ruled out as an optional desalination site?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Noosa for his question.

On 26 March 2008 the Queensland Water Commission released the draft *South East Queensland Water Strategy* for public consultation. Six potential sites have been identified for detailed investigation. These investigations will commence now and take approximately two and a half to three years to complete.

The six sites that are identified in the Strategy are the best sites, based on work completed by consultants and water supply needs. Peregian is not one of these sites because social and environmental issues associated with the site made it less favourable than the six potential sites that were announced in the SEQ Water Strategy. In particular, unlike the six identified sites, the Peregian site is privately owned.

In addition, the Peregian site ranked worse than the nearby Marcoola site in relation to disturbance to environmentally sensitive areas and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

The Strategy states that, following the completion of committed projects, additional sources of water will not be required until at least 2028, except as part of the response to a drought as severe as the current drought. However, up to 380,000 megalitres per annum of additional climate resilient supply may be required by 2056 to respond to a drought like the current one. 380,000 megalitres is over eight times the capacity of the Tugun desalination facility currently being constructed on the Gold Coast. It is over four and half times the capacity of the Western Corridor Recycled Water Project.

The draft Strategy seeks to preserve best options now to minimise impacts in the future, if and when further water supplies are required. This is prudent and reasonable

planning. As a responsible government, we are ensuring that appropriate planning is undertaken now to secure South East Queensland's water supply for the future. This includes securing and preserving sites for future desalination in consultation with the community.

There are a limited number of potential desalination sites in SEQ, which is why the best remaining sites must be preserved now. The Commission specifically requested GHD consider smaller sites on the Sunshine Coast due to the strategic importance of preserving a potential site in this area. It is important to preserve sites that offer access to oceanic water due to concerns about the potential impact of brine dispersal on Moreton Bay.