

F2008/02047  
4 July 2014

Water Act Review Secretariat  
Water Reform Division  
Department of the Environment  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Re: Submission to the review of the Water Act 2007**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the review of the Water Act 2007.

Wyong Shire Council as a Water Supply Authority is required to provide information to the Bureau of Meteorology under the Water Act 2007 and the Water Regulations 2008. The information provided by WSC also incorporates information from Gosford City Council as the two councils share an integrated water supply system.

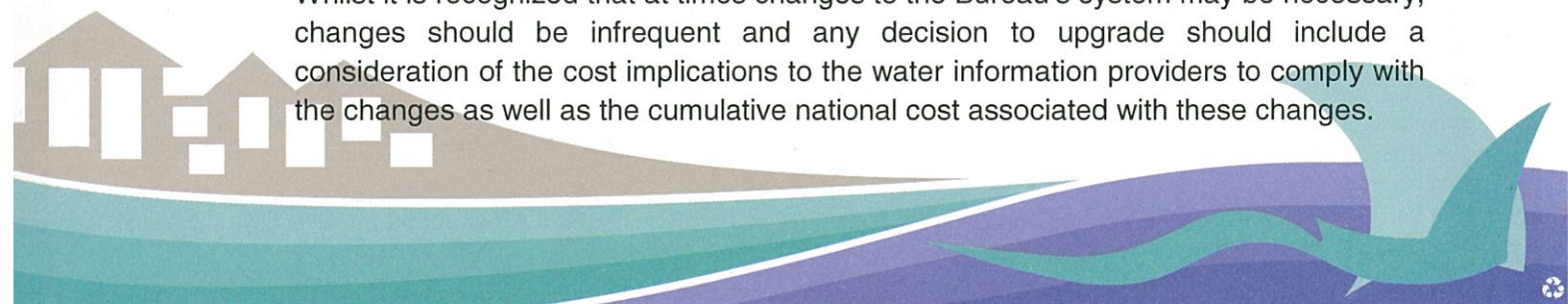
The Bureau of Meteorology requires the water information to be provided in Water Data Transfer Format (WDTF) to enable it to easily collect consistent national data.

To meet the Bureau's data requirements, the councils have established a database management system that extracts relevant data from the Councils' SCADA (System Control and Data Acquisition) systems, converts it into WDTF then transmits it to the Bureau's database. The project for establishing this system was jointly funded by the Bureau and the Councils. The system is bespoke and required specialist IT consultants to establish as the councils do not have the necessary capacity to establish such a system.

The councils have been providing ongoing water information to the Bureau using this database management system. All the operating and maintenance expenses associated with this system are jointly borne by Wyong Shire and Gosford City Councils.

A significant issue for the councils is that the Bureau's water information requirements are regularly being changed requiring the councils to make modifications to our systems. Due to the complexity and nature of the system, the councils are unable to undertake the modifications in house and have to engage specialist IT consultants to make the necessary changes. This presents the councils with an ongoing financial burden.

Whilst it is recognized that at times changes to the Bureau's system may be necessary, changes should be infrequent and any decision to upgrade should include a consideration of the cost implications to the water information providers to comply with the changes as well as the cumulative national cost associated with these changes.



It is suggested that consideration be given to making amendments to the Water Act or associated regulation requiring that proposed changes to reporting requirements undergo an economic review prior to implementation. The economic review would include consideration of the costs to the Bureau and to all national data providers associated with the proposed changes.

It is acknowledged that improvements and changes are inevitable in such a large and complex system. However, consideration should be given to the consolidation of such changes and the provision of financial assistance to the data providers to implement those changes.

Yours Faithfully



Garry Casement  
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