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Draft Scoping Requirements for Desalination Project EES

Bird Observation and Conservation Australia (BOCA) is a national non-government organisation with more than 3,000 members throughout Australia. BOCA's objectives may be summarised as appreciation, education and conservation relating to Australian birds and their habitat.

The site selected for the desalination plant and nearby areas are well-recognised as important habitat for birds. In fact the Western Port Branch of BOCA regularly visits that area because of the diversity of birdlife.

As a general comment the Draft Scoping Requirements, if followed, should result in a useful EES. However it is extremely disappointing that the desalination option has been adopted, with a pilot plant to be constructed and no information on the all-important issue of sustainable power supply before the draft EES is completed and available for community comment.

Section 5.4 requires the EES to set out the details of the desalination plant, marine structures, water transfer pipeline and electricity supply with an assessment of the potential environmental effects. This indicates that only one option for each of these very important structural elements will be available for comment in the draft EES. For transparency, the draft EES should investigate options for each of these elements and seek comment on these.

This region of Victoria has been extensively cleared of native vegetation so it is very important that the desalination plant and associated infrastructure, including the electricity supply and the pipeline to Melbourne do not result in loss of more native vegetation. Of particular concern are The Gurdies and Grantville Nature Conservation Reserves and remnant vegetation along roadsides.

Section 5.6.6, fourth dot-point, mentions a number of species to which should be added Latham's Snipe and Australasian Bittern. Blue-winged Parrot is also of special interest because Orange-bellied Parrots are often associated with that species.

BOCA looks forward to the opportunity to comment on the draft EES.

Richard Hunter
Chief Executive Officer

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