

30 GOOD REASONS why a desalination megaplant at Kurnell must not go ahead.

- Because...**
1. Sydney, having the highest annual rainfall of all the state capitals (average 1217mm), doesn't need desalination.
 2. Sydney needs, instead, improved stormwater-capture, water-conserving efficiencies, and water-recycling.
 3. Location of the plant at Kurnell is ridiculous – all the water is to go to Sydney's eastern suburbs!
 4. Even if the plant were needed [it isn't], sane planning would have located it on the north side of Botany Bay.
 5. Few Sydneysiders had heard or understood the term “desalinated seawater” when it was abruptly announced, 11 July 2005.
 6. No reason was given for lack of prior consultation with water scientists, Kurnell residents or Sutherland Shire Council.
 7. Only after its announcement did the NSW Government reveal that it had “researched the options” – for six months!
 8. All protests (there have been many) have been ignored or given only token consideration by the Government.
 9. Premier Carr's announcement was staged PR: a trip to the desert sheikdom of Dubai to solemnly savour a glass of desalinated water in front of TV cameras.
 10. Premier Carr inspired no confidence: he resigned 16 days after his trip, and took up later a \$500,000 consultancy with Macquarie Bank, known for pursuing government-guaranteed infrastructure projects.
 11. Many Sydney water scientists immediately challenged the decision to go ahead with the expensive plant.
 12. Scientists from NSW University's Kensington Group stressed desalination should only be a “last resort” – and Sydney is nowhere near that.
 13. The scientists showed that Sydney has immense scope for accelerating water harvesting/recycling, i.e. for avoiding desalination.
 14. Scientists and citizens pointed to the absurdity of stormwater rushing from a million Sydney roofs into the ocean – to be desalinated!

15. Stormwater should be collected, directed to catchments, utilised as “grey water” and, as needed, purified by Sydney Water.
16. Faced with a wall of opposition, the Government promised *no start unless Sydney’s dams fell below 30%* – now a broken promise.
17. Successive Ministers repeated the not-till-30% promise, often also saying “only as a last resort” – and they’ve broken all promises.
18. During 2006, Premier Iemma bowed to the storm of opposition by making modifying statements interpreted by the media as “shelving” the plant, but preparatory work continued surreptitiously.
19. The “shelving” can now be seen to have been a ploy to distract the media and disarm the critics – deception that largely succeeded.
20. The Government lavishly spent money to give desalination a friendly face, e.g. the Jack Thompson ads, free bottles of desalinated water at railway stations.
21. The Government shamelessly manipulated drought concerns – *loud* talk of its concern, *quiet* ditching of its not-till-30% promises.
22. When weather forecasts indicated drought-relieving autumn/winter rains – no chance of 30% ever happening – the Government was forced to say blatantly that desalination would go ahead anyway.
23. Just weeks before the 24 March State Election, the Premier made a little publicised announcement that if elected he would build the plant, a policy not given prominence in Labor electoral advertising.
24. Once elected on other issues, the Government speciously claimed it had a “mandate” to proceed with the plant’s construction.
25. The Government’s haste in pushing ahead with the plant is in stark contrast to its many failures to expedite really needed infrastructure projects, such as public transport.
26. From the first (July 2005), the Government invoked a “critical infrastructure” law to take away the right of the Kurnell community and Sutherland Shire Council to legally challenge the siting/construction/operation of the plant – though the plant is clearly NOT CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE!

27. On the Government's own admissions, its rush to construct the plant is without any justification: on one hand, it has said the plant can be constructed in 26 months, on the other it has been forced to admit that there is 3-4 years supply of water in the dams (even at the lowest point of the drought) – so it has plenty of time, even if the dams did fall to 30%, which of course, they haven't. There is no emergency, no “critical” situation, no need for haste... the Government's case is without a shred of credibility.
28. The damaging effects of this unnecessary, expensive desalination project extend beyond Kurnell township and the marine life near the inlet/outlet pipes: all of Botany Bay will suffer irreparably from the huge pipeline-trenching right across the bay because it will break up the nature-stabilised bottom with destructive effects (including turbidity) on the already struggling sea-life – possibly for decades.
29. The pipeline-trenching would take place mainly in 2008 precisely when two other major dredging assaults are happening in other parts of the Bay: a deep trench for an electric cable from La Perouse to Kurnell, and removal of over 7 million tonnes of bottom material for expansion of Port Botany. So residents, fishermen, scientists and environmentalists are expressing dismay at “this triple whammy that sounds the death-knell of historic Botany Bay” – emphasising the need to stop the desalination pipeline.
30. Finally, **30** is the number, the symbol, that indicts the Government's two years of desalination duplicity: its stack of broken promises NOT to proceed till Sydney's dams fall below the 30% level and its blatant, developer-driven decision to go ahead regardless of all reason. The dams are now around 50% and rising. No further argument is needed.

Bob Walshe, Convenor of 11 Community Groups of Sutherland Shire opposed to desalination.