

Lowood & District Golf Club Inc.

Submission

Further to the meeting held at the Fernvale Community hall on 22nd June 2012 where Angus McDonald addressed the proposed new pricing structure for irrigators in the central region of the Brisbane River, the Lowood and District Golf Club inc. would like to make the following submission.

Lowood and District Golf Club Inc. has endeavoured over many years, to develop an on-site water storage system that supports a water wise irrigation system and one that links to a practical irrigation minimisation management regime. Our storage area is in the form of two dams each having a capacity of 5ML. The dams are located across the south-eastern section of our 9 hole golf course. These dams capture run-off water from the golf course as well as from a sizable section of Lowood's urban centre and supplements our supply of golf course irrigation water from the Brisbane River.

Our 40ML. Licence from the Brisbane River is our primary source of irrigation water for the golf course. We recognise its value as an asset to the club, and have no wish to sell all or part of this licence, although we are open to a temporary transfer of part of the allocation to other needy irrigators during particularly dry times.

Currently we maintain a 2 inch poly pipe line from a 18000 Litres/Hour capacity pump located on the river bank and utilise this system to top-up our dams. Records of pumping times are kept by the club. The installation of a larger meter that conforms to proposed new national standards we believe is not warranted for our smaller system, and would be an expense the club can neither afford nor justify.

Even if the Government proposed to provide the first meter to our irrigation system that is in accord with the proposed national standards for irrigation pumps, and is estimated to cost f \$9000 per licence holder (as suggested at the public meeting at Fernvale), the capacity of this larger meter far exceeds the requirements of our existing pipe line to deal with such water quantities..

Adding to our concerns about the proposed introduction of an irrigation pricing regime in the central reaches of the Brisbane River, is the fact that recent floods and releases from Wivenhoe Dam have resulted in numerous irrigators along the central reach of the Brisbane River suffering major stream bank damage and lost their pumps and associated infrastructure. Our pump was dislodged from its mounting position during the January 2011 floods and cost the club \$2000 to repair this damage.

The proposal to treat all irrigators across Queensland equally, while laudable, fails to acknowledge the special circumstances of the reach of the Brisbane River from the wall of Lake Wivenhoe to the Mt Crosby treatment plant.

Remediating and maintaining this “natural” water supply line to ensure the water reaching Mt Crosby is of a high standard, and results in reduced treatment costs for urban consumers, places high expectations on riparian landholders and irrigators in relation to the way they manage both their land and water usage.

The Lowood and District Golf Club Inc. is endeavouring to play its part in maximising the benefits of having a cost-effective , high quality water supply scheme that services the needs of all south east Queenslanders by minimising our demand on water from the Brisbane River. We have achieved this by utilising our onsite dams as much as possible, which acts as sediment detention ponds during high rainfall events, thus reducing sediment flows into the river.

Proposals

We propose water usage charges should not be pre-paid according to the size of an irrigator’s water allocation. Fees should be charged retrospectively and in accordance with actual water used in any financial year, along with a yet to be negotiated base charge to cover a % component of the capital and maintenance costs of the relevant dam infrastructure that helps contribute to a near 100% assurance of water availability. This charging regime would be in keeping with the current manner of levelling water use charges on those landholders connected to urban water schemes. The incentive of this approach is to make irrigators weatherwise.

We also propose that the percentage “recreational” charge incorporated into the base charge, be scrapped for irrigators.

Riparian landholders struggle with the adverse impacts of illegal and intrusive use made of their land by a section of the recreating public. Landholders are contributing considerable in-kind support to the Government by “cleaning up” after the public and restoring stream banks damaged by the indiscriminate use of 4 wheel drive vehicles that choose to recreate on their land.

Forwarded for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

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