

SAY “NO” TO DRINKING RECYCLED SEWAGE

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

7.30pm JUNE 14, Olympus Room, Hellenic Club, Woden

You are being asked by the ACT Government if you want to drink recycled sewage. There are 5 good reasons why you should say a loud NO! Recycling sewage into our drinking water is not necessary, not clean nor Green. It's expensive. It could be dangerous and there are cheaper and safer alternatives.

ACTEW's own *Future Water Options* report in April 2005 said that the ACT has enough water resources for a million people. After allowing for water returned to rivers, the ACT uses only 6% of its estimated average water resources of 494 Gigalitres. Canberra uses only 65 GL a year and returns half to the river.

(www.actew.com.au/futurewateroptions/documents/assessmentReport.pdf p iii).

It's UNNECESSARY

Canberra's dams were built to store enough water for 450,000 people *without* any water restrictions. Dam levels are now low because the ACT Government & ACTEW have emptied them throughout this drought. **109 Gigalitres (twenty months' supply) were let out from when the dams were last full in 2000 up to May 2004.** Even late last year after 5 years of drought the ACT Government was ordering 20 Megalitres to be emptied out every day - enough water over a year for 29,000 households, almost a third of Canberra! ACTEW's own WATER2WATER graph shows that for each year from 2001 to 2005 annual flows into the dams were at 60 Gigalitres or more – enough to supply Canberra and Queanbeyan for those years. Only in 2006 did the inflows drop below 60 Gigalitres. *If water had not been unnecessarily let out of the dams in the previous low rainfall years, dam levels would be nowhere near as low as they are now. Amazingly, ACTEW seems to have let nearly 15 GL (three months water) out even in 2006, the worst rainfall year on record, and the ACT Government intends to let 3.5 GL out even while Level 4 (Level 5) restrictions are imposed on us and our gardens finally destroyed to save only 1.5 GL. (see Canberra Times 16 and 18 May 2007)*

It's NOT GREEN

The existing downhill gravity flow from the Bendora Dam to the Stromlo treatment plan has zero pumping cost. Pumping recycled sewage uphill from the sewage treatment plant into Cotter water and then uphill again to the Stromlo treatment plant with the 2 extra filtration systems for the sewage and dam water will mean *very high ongoing energy consumption forever.*

It's EXPENSIVE

The cost of the new Cotter Dam will probably be \$200 million plus and the sewage filtration system will be another \$150 million. High double pumping and double filtration costs will mean **permanent** high ongoing costs. By contrast, water from a new dam on the Tennent was estimated at costing only 9.2 cents per kilolitre to deliver. The overall cost for Tennent water was estimated by ACTEW at only \$150 per household per year on average.

It could be DANGEROUS and is it CLEAN?

Many people die in Third World countries from water borne diseases. People have even died in America from diseases in their drinking water. But, when things go wrong, waterborne infections can affect and seriously sicken thousands of people - even in developed countries. Recycling sewage into drinking water was rejected by ACTEW in April 2004 in its own technical report because of its "high cost" and "**perceived health risks**". Dr Peter Collignon, Director of the Infectious Diseases Unit and Microbiology Dept. at Canberra Hospital and Professor of Clinical Medicine at the ANU has warned in the strongest terms that recycling sewage into drinking water carries inherent risks and should only be used where there is no other reasonable or safe alternative (Canberra Times 30 March 2007). No one has shown evidence to refute these warnings!

There are CHEAPER & SAFER alternatives

ACTEW's own *Future Water Options* project rejected recycling sewage outright and put forward options in 2005 to tap the Naas and Gudgenby River Catchment adjacent to the Cotter River. ACTEW's factsheet on the large Tennent Dam option states: "*The Large Tennent Option would create the ACT's largest dam with a volume of 159 GL (billion litres) and increase the ACT's water storage by about 74 per cent... A new large Tennent Dam would collect water from the large catchment of the Naas, Gudgenby and Orroral rivers...When full the Large Tennent Dam would store the equivalent of 27 months of water use. Because of the large volume, this option would be a reliable source of water in a long drought...The cost to the average household ratepayer, assuming construction begins soon, would be \$150 per year*".

So why should we pay \$350 million plus for the privilege of drinking recycled sewage? Must we be the guinea pigs for sewage water recycling technology that is still developing, risky, expensive, virtually unused anywhere else and just not needed here?

Email, ring, fax or write your Legislative Assembly member NOW (GPO Box 1020 Canberra ACT 2060). Tell them that you want a clean, safe, constant water supply at reasonable cost and without the high costs and risks of recycled sewage:

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