

January 21st 2018 Alstonville

Meeting between Save Alstonville Aquifer and Chief Scientist

Today Represented by:

Michael Hogan

David Huett

Troy Outerbridge

Marg Paddon ✓

Thank you for allow^{ing} us to be heard today.

Save Alstonville Aquifer (SAA) is a community based group representing all residents of Alstonville and Wollongbar and we are very active. To date we have had many meeting's including with MP for Ballina- Tamara Smith, MLC- Ben Franklin and Ballina Mayor David Wright as well as media. We have a Facebook page, have released 4 media releases, conducted both radio and television interviews, pushing our fight to Stop Water Mining. We continue to contact these members.

Save Alstonville Aquifer have developed an excellent relationship with MLC Ben Franklin.

We have unquestionable total community support.

We are absolutely committed to the cause to Stop Water Mining within the Alstonville Aquifer, we represent the entire community. During the short time to respond to the Development Application, we were able to obtain 900 formal submissions all against Water Mining, that's 900 out of a population of 7000 residents, such results have never been seen before in this Shire. We are still being contacted by residents who have only just heard about the issue. Not one resident we have spoken to, is in favour of Water Mining.

I formally challenge both the Fact Sheet which was released, as not being pertinent to the Alstonville Aquifer, and the Terms of Reference which I believe are more generalised, need to be broadened to review each site as an entity.

Issues I feel need to be researched should include:

- The Economic Value of Present Agriculture within the aquifer footprint
- Baseline records for recharge and extraction relating to the Aquifer
- Accurate data details by way of formal monitoring/recording present extractions from both legal and illegal bores
- Global Warming threat
- Flora & Fauna at risk : e.g. Platypus in Marom Creek
- Potential Ecosystem damage

In relation to Alstonville Aquifer proposal, the onus of proof is on the developer to guarantee a 0% impact. I note "no more than minimal harm" is contained with the legislation.

Our group has read and obtained well researched articles and reports pertaining to the Alstonville Aquifer. Time and time again these reports by State and Local Government clearly state the Aquifer is under stress and has been for a long time.

Some highlights from the attached reports:-

It was reported in 2009 – the level of the Aquifer was 1000 mega litre short.

1987- 2004 records show decline

Shallow Aquifer has declined in past 5 years. From late 2004 a decline was observed

Deep Aquifer has dropped 7 to 19 metres- and slower to recharge

A walk around the area today shows parched earth, dry creeks, above average temperatures and lower rainfall.

This Aquifer plays an important role within the Northern Rivers, it provides some residents only source of water for domestic, stock and domestic, and for irrigation, but it does not stop there. It plays a pivotal role within the ecosystems on the plateau, down to the Tuckean Wetlands and last but not least, it flows into and feeds the Richmond River.

This river has been rated one of the worst within the State of NSW, it too is regularly subject to fish kills. The fishing and oyster industry within the river is all but gone. Presently research is being conducted into new varieties of oysters, so far the water quality has not supported this venture to move forward. Once, this area was famous for its oysters, what industry will be next if we allow water mining to be approved.

My Licence, was applied for in 1998. I had to complete an application to substantiate the allocation I was applying for at the time. Along with that application came a set of rules, one of which states the water allocation had to be used by the farmer nominated on the application on the subject land. It seems today, anyone can move and use bore volume allocation outside those rules.

It is well known to locals there are several large allocations relating to Alstonville Aquifer presently on the market for sale, one of which is allocated at 203 ML/y. These types of allocations were for irrigation, where a component was used by the crop or tree during watering, and a residual amount was returned to the Aquifer. It is my understanding that water taken for water mining for whatever end use, will never return to recharge the Aquifer. This practice is fraught with danger.

Election Year.

Reports highlighted include:

State of the Environment 2004 Ballina Shire Council

DPNR- Stress identified

Future Water Strategy

Integrated Water Planning

Rous Water 2014

Brodie et al