

Compass Springs Water – Draft ESCOSA Determination January 2021

Three public meetings were hosted by ESCOSA staff in Mount Compass. The meetings took place on Tuesday 12 January at 2:00 and 6:30 pm and Thursday at 2:00 pm. Attendances at each meeting were: Tues 2:00 pm – 42; Tues 6:30 pm – 21; Thurs 2:00 pm – 30. Apologies received from residents not able to attend amounted to 10.

Minister Hon David Basham MP, Keith Parkes Mayor of Alexandrina Council, Hon Robert Brokenshire – former member of Legislative Council also attended and are included in the numbers above. Michael Simmons, a journalist from the Victor Harbor Times, attended the Thursday session.

Following each of the presentations and the Q&A's, a short private session was held between the residents only. The comments from each session were very consistent and can be summarised as follows:

- Firstly, the residents appreciated that ESCOSA held the meetings and appeared to be receptive to the comments and ideas put forward. The residents were also appreciative that the date for submissions has been extended by one week to Friday 22nd January 2021.

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] It was also a pity that the proprietor chose to send an admin staffer to attend the three meetings, record the meetings and take copious notes – she did not appear to interact with anyone. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], it was decided that to go down this path of investigating 'fit and proper person' would be a long and slow process that required a large amount of factual evidence. It was therefore agreed that this would probably not be a worthwhile approach and although the residents were incensed about this, it is probably not worth pursuing for now until all other actions are exhausted.

- ESCOSA, aside from determining a maximum revenue total, stated that they are able to consider including requirements about tiering, quarterly charges and when meters should be read.

The residents were of a very strong mind in suggesting that this is an essential inclusion in any determination and therefore it is something that ESCOSA must now look at in more detail as there is little, if any, confidence in Compass Springs being able to initiate and manage this aspect on a fair and equitable basis.

- ESCOSA stated that there was some difficulty in analysing and verifying the data information supplied by Compass Springs in relation to the water used by the residents and that used by the golf course, the adjacent sand mine, any new land development work or for anything else.

In response, the residents offered to provide information on their own actual water usage by submitting quarterly meter readings extending back as far as possible up to 1 July 2016 which coincides with the purchase of the water supply by Compass Springs. We will encourage all residents to submit this information over the next

week or so which should then enable ESCOSA to better gauge the average residential usage per year.

- In relation to Compass Springs remaining as the sole provider and hence a monopoly, the residents were unanimous that this was not at all satisfactory. The residents therefore request one of the following:
 - Compass Springs to relinquish their water licence in favour of SAWater,
 - Compass Springs to allow an interconnection to the SAWater infrastructure such that residents can select their supplier and thus introduce competition in the water supply, or,
 - The State Government to fund SAWater to install a separated infrastructure to mirror that provided by Compass Springs and allow residents to choose their supplier.
- Residents suggest very strongly that water contracts in place that extended prior to Compass Springs purchasing the system, should remain in place under common law. The residents request that ESCOSA further investigate this.

Please note that many of the residents are paying exactly what SAWater charge (per tiers and supply charge) and have advised Compass Springs that the matter remains in dispute while ESCOSA resolves the pricing determination. Note also that ESCOSA have refused to accept Compass Springs' claim of outstanding debts of some \$145,000 in the calculation of the draft 'revenue cap'.

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- Residents raised the matter of depreciation of the water infrastructure and request that ESCOSA further investigate the legitimacy of this given that the water infrastructure costs and a period of maintenance has always been included into the purchase price of land at the development stage. The residents are of the view that by considering depreciation of the assets again as a charge to the residents is in fact double dipping and request that ESCOSA have this matter further investigated.

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17 January 2021

On behalf of residents who are customers of Compass Springs Water