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CALLS FOR A MORATORIUM ON POWER AND WATER GRAB FOR 6% INCREASE TAKE OF RURAL WATER

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the announcement by the Minister for Essential Services to increase the capacity of the Howard East Borefield by 6% should send out alarm signals to rural residents.

Gerry says the Government is asking people to put meters on their bores so that the Government can gather information over the next 2 years to allow better forward planning of water usage in the rural area whilst at the same time announcing it will increase the capacity of the Howard East Borefield. This seems incongruous.

Gerry says the government needs to make clear its intentions. Does the ‘increased capacity’ mean an increase in the volume of water pumped? Or does it mean that there will be increase in the number of bores with no change to the volume pumped?

If the intention is to increase the amount of water pumped then Gerry says there should be a moratorium until the water metering study is completed and the results of that study presented back to the community for comment.

Gerry says that there should be no need to increase the amount of water pumped from the rural area as the government has announced it will be increasing the capacity of the Darwin River Dam by 22% by increasing the height of the spillway wall. If that is not enough then it is about time we got serious with a new dam.

If the Government still intends to take extra water then there should at be least an $8m equivalent spent on upgrading headworks and expanding the reticulated supply into the rural area to get rid of all the inefficient and wasteful private lines and reduce reliance on bores for some rural residents.

Another alternative is to actively promote the use of native plants and by recycling the water that goes into Darwin Harbour through the sewage system so as to reduce the amount of water used in Darwin by 6%! What about a subsidy on rainwater tanks?

Footnote. If the government can be tough on developers of rural subdivisions in the rural area when it comes to proving a sustainable water supply it can apply the same stringent tests to Power and Water.