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Sent: Sunday, 13 March 2016 2:27 PM
To: publicsubmissions <publicsubmissions@erawa.com.au>
Subject: Fwd: ERA Submission

Operating Licence: WaterCorp of WA

In recent times i have become aware of a significant exemption granted to the WaterCorp under its previous operating licence. That exemption relates to the water supply pressure in certain parts of the Perth Hills, among a number of other areas.

I have lived here in Sawyers Valley, literally on the border with the locality of Mount Helena for 20 years now and it was only in the last year and a half that I became aware of this exemption. Thankfully, the matter to which it applies does not affect me and I do appreciate that in a region of the Perth Metropolitan area that is greatly undulating, it is impossible to ensure even water pressure without significant modifications to the existing reticulated network.

However, as a Shire Councillor, I am concerned that the knowledge of the significant variations in water pressure across the Hills suburbs of the Mundaring Shire is not generally known. Indeed, many of my friends in the local volunteer Fire Brigades network and the residents who I have contact with in the course of my Council duties are very surprised to learn that their water pressure at the meter may be well in excess of the maximum that applies to areas where the exemption is not applicable.

That this is the case is even more concerning when it is not generally appreciated that the higher pressure could have an impact upon warranties for household appliances to which the higher pressure water is delivered.

I am certainly not advocating that the exemptions to WaterCorp be rescinded or that that body be required to ensure that all water in the Hills is delivered within the standard pressure range. However, I do believe it is incumbent upon the Corporation to ensure that its customers are made aware of any exemption applying to the service delivered to their property. That is, to inform all customers so affected that the water pressure may be below or above the boundaries of the standard range. In fact, during discussions with senior staff at WaterCorp, I understood that they had undertaken that this information would be conveyed to existing customers; that the Plumbers Registration Board would be asked to ensure that members consolidated this information by further advising WaterCorp customers when doing work on their properties; and, that the Corporation would use the notifications systems at Landgate to alert prospective purchasers of property in affected areas of the possibility that their water pressure was outside the standard range delineated in the operating licence.

If customers were so aware, then they could, at least, take steps to moderate higher pressures. Whether they should be given an incentive to do so by way of a subsidy is a matter for our political masters to decide. I am not advocating that WaterCorp be required to install or subsidise the cost of pressure reduction devices.

But, I am asking that the Corporation's Operating Licence require it to undertake an immediate process of notifying all customers in areas where the exemptions apply to inform those customers of the possibility that their water pressure may be outside the standard range and that this may affect the life or warranty coverage of items connected to the water service.

I also ask that the Corporation be required to require the Plumbers Registration Board to circularise all registered plumbers and to make it a requirement that the plumbers advise residents/businesses/etc where water pressure is outside the standards set out in the Operating Licence.

Finally, a condition of the Licence be that the Corporation liaise with Landgate so as to place a notification on the relevant sites/material regarding water pressures outside the standards of the Operating Licence.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Bertola