



Office of the

## Minister for Energy and Water Supply

Ref: CLLO-CIC-14157

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15 December 2014

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

*Neil*

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 28 November 2014 enclosing a copy of Petition No 2285-14 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition draws to the attention of the House the decision by Seqwater to close Lake Kurwongbah to water skiing as of 8 September 2014, which did not occur because of a successful local community campaign and strong local representation from two local MPs - Seath Holswich (Pine Rivers) and Trevor Ruthenberg (Kallangur).

In June 2013, Seqwater began the most extensive review of recreational activities and facilities at South East Queensland (SEQ) dams and catchments ever undertaken. The review covered 20 lakes grouped into nine regional clusters. The reason for reviewing dams in clusters rather than individually was to ensure, where possible, Seqwater could provide as diverse a recreation experience as possible within each community across the region. The review also took into consideration that - unlike other capital city regions like Sydney and Melbourne where no public access is permitted - most of SEQ's water storage lakes are open to public for recreational activities. Clearly, this presents a unique challenge. For this reason, the review had to balance any additional recreational activity with ensuring there was no adverse effect on drinking water quality and public health.

The initial water quality assessment of Lake Samsonvale indicated the lake would not be able to cope with any additional activity. For this reason Seqwater allowed paddling onto Kurwongbah to deliver on review outcomes. Unfortunately, this would have resulted in the Lake Kurwongbah Water Ski Zone Club (the club), as well as Water Ski Queensland, being unable to continue to use the lake because of public safety concerns with skiers interacting with paddlers.

Additionally, while the recreation review has seen a range of new activities and facilities introduced across the region, Lake Samsonvale is one of a number of lakes where additional recreation activities have been unable to be accommodated due to risks to water quality.

However, because of the very strong and persistent representations from local MPs Seath Holswich MP (Pine Rivers) and Trevor Ruthenberg MP (Kallangur) who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to come up with a workable solution for recreation activities on Lake Kurwongbah, Seqwater revisited its original decision. And, in early October 2014, I was pleased to join both hardworking local MPs and members of the Club to announce Seqwater would undertake a more detailed quantitative water quality assessment to help determine whether the region's lakes can be opened up further to recreation in the future and, if so, how it can be safely managed without putting drinking water or public health and safety at risk.

This water quality assessment, which started over two months ago, will be one of the most complex and comprehensive of its kind undertaken in Australia and is expected to take between 12 and 18 months to complete as a longitudinal study. Importantly, the study will underpin Seqwater's approach to water-based recreation across the region into the future. In the interim, however, Seqwater has considered a number of proposals from the local community and advised me the best way to manage all identified local risks and has allowed public access for paddlers to the lake from Friday to Monday inclusive, while the club and Water Ski Queensland are able to share the lake from Tuesday to Thursday. Water skiers will have exclusive access to Lake Kurwongbah for two charity events each year. The current arrangement for the existing rowing club will not be impacted.

These new arrangements for Lake Kurwongbah will allow the whole community to have access to the lake for the first time since the dam was built, while also allowing Waterski Queensland to continue to use the lake as a training venue for elite skiers. Clearly, this is real tribute to how effective a local community and their elected representatives can be in getting decision-makers to listen and, just as importantly, a Government that will listen and act in the best interests of local residents.

However, for reasons of public safety, it is important to recognise that water skiing can only be contemplated on Lake Kurwongbah as a permanent activity in the future if the general public can be safely accommodated and the key risks are well managed. That is why - based on their very effective local partnership to date - I strongly encourage Seqwater, the club and local residents to work closely with their hard-working local MPs' Seath Holswich (Pine Rivers) and Trevor Ruthenberg (Kallangur) to come up with a practical way this outcome may be able to be achieved when the water quality study is completed.

I recognise that the club has been a long time user of the lake and that members may not be able to utilise the lake at the allotted times. So Seqwater has also offered to provide three-year complimentary boat permits for club members to utilise Lake Somerset. To date 44 of the 70 club members have requested and received complimentary permits.

In addition, as with the general water skiing public, club members have been encouraged to use Seqwater's other ski dams in the region, including Moogerah, Maroon, Atkinson, Bill Gunn and Borumba dams. Locations of all Seqwater ski dams can be found at: [www.seqwater.com.au](http://www.seqwater.com.au).

Seqwater is holding an information session with the local community this month providing information on the water quality study at Lake Samsonvale. Seqwater also encourages the community to keep up-to-date with the latest information on its Dam Improvement Program at Sideling Creek Dam by subscribing to e-updates via the Seqwater website at: [www.seqwater.com.au/damimprovement](http://www.seqwater.com.au/damimprovement).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mark McArdle', is written over the typed name.

Mark McArdle MP  
**Minister for Energy and Water Supply**