

## **REPORT ON ECCO GENERAL MEETING MARCH 23 2011**

As the ECCO General Meeting for March 2011, was a public meeting devoted solely to information concerning the Macquarie River pipeline, there was no general business conducted.

The meeting was well attended; the attendance consisted of ECCO members and members of the general public who obviously had an interest in this issue.

The podium was shared by Mr. Chris Devitt, Director of Technical Services from Orange City Council and Mr. Tony Perry, General Manager of Central Tablelands Water.

Mr. Perry conducted the initial presentation, which outlined the following points concerning the pipeline.

- A long term proposed solution for the water security of Orange and other local councils is seen as being Lake Rowlands, which is situated on Coombing Creek, and has been supplying Blayney, Cabonne and Weddin shires.
- Proposals have been put forward to increasing the capacity of Lake Rowlands and building a pipeline from the dam to Orange.
- This is a long term solution for Orange's water security and will not be on line for 10-15 years. Orange may not be able to wait that long for water security, given the unpredictability of the weather and Orange's small and erratic catchment area.
- Funding for the Lake Rowlands project has not been secured, whereas funding for the Macquarie River pipeline is more certain. The Macquarie River pipeline can be seen as a much more immediate solution to Orange's water future.
- There has yet to be an environmental assessment done on the proposed Lake Rowlands project, so it is not 100% certain that the project is possible.
- Lake Rowlands will only supply Orange in extremes of drought.

Mr. Devitt provided the following information from the perspective of Orange City Council

- Orange requires other methods of obtaining water in addition to stormwater harvesting, water saving measures and through the normal catchment.
- Orange has a small catchment and is not situated on a river system like other towns of comparable size in the region
- There are restrictions placed on how much water can be extracted from storm water harvesting. Orange requires a supplementary water source if it is to meet its current water demands and continue to grow.
- There will also be stringent rules attached to any extraction via the pipeline
- Water will only be extracted via pipeline as an emergency measure.
- Water will only be extracted during periods of high flow in the river.

- The pipeline is by no means a “fait accompli”. The project must meet environmental standards and comply with myriad regulations before it is passed. This may not happen.

Methods of alternative water extraction suggested at the meeting by members of the audience:

- Possible increase of stormwater extraction
- Aquifer recharges
- Greater access to groundwater
- Raising the Suma Park dam wall
- Recycling effluent for potable water
- Renegotiating with Cadia Mines for the return of Orange treated effluent water
- More stringent demand management
- Home water saving strategies built into the Development Control Plan, which is up for renewal this year
- Mandatory water tanks on all new homes.

Nick King  
Secretary