

# David Barr MP

Independent Member for Manly



2 June 2004

Mr John Feil  
Executive Director  
National Competition Council  
GPO Box 250B  
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Mr Feil,

**Re: Application for declaration from Services Sydney**

I wish to write with my in-principle support of the application from Services Sydney for access to Sydney Water's sewage network.

I have enclosed a copy of a Private Member's Statement I recently gave to Parliament on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Barr'.

David Barr  
Member for Manly

## Services Sydney Sewage and Waste Water Treatment Proposal.

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard. This record is a proof version. See bottom of page for classifications and links relating to this extract.

### SERVICES SYDNEY SEWAGE AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT PROPOSAL

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**Mr DAVID BARR** (Manly) [5.55 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House a proposal by a company called Services Sydney to develop and operate a new platform for the treatment and disposal of Sydney's sewage and waste water. The company's proposal has the potential to replace Sydney's deep ocean outfalls as the main disposal method for Sydney's waste water. The proposal would also help address Sydney's long-term water supply needs by returning treated waste water to the river catchments. Issues concerning water quality and the treatment of waste water have long been of concern to the people of my electorate. Beach pollution from the ocean outfall at North Head was one of the driving factors behind the establishment of the independent movement in Manly in the late 1980s. At that time the Government's response was to move rapidly towards the construction of deep ocean outfalls. The effect this had on cleaning up the beaches was dramatic and water quality has remained consistently good. However, the construction of the deep ocean outfalls was only ever a quick fix. While Sydney may now have cleaner beaches, serious problems remain with the disposal of our wastewater.

Each day Sydney Water disposes of more than 1,000 Olympic-size swimming pools of partially treated sewage through the ocean outfalls. Not only is that a serious environmental problem, it also represents a gross waste of our increasingly scarce water resources. At present, demand for water in Sydney is outstripping supply. Our city currently uses 1,700 million litres of water per day, or about 400 litres for each person every day. While Sydney Water has made significant gains in reducing per capita water consumption, continued population growth and reduced rainfall from climate change is putting further pressure on our water resources. Within the next 20 years Sydney's population is predicted to expand to almost five million. The problem is made even more serious by the CSIRO's prediction that by 2030 Sydney's rainfall will be reduced by around 15 per cent. It is clear that security of the water supply is fast becoming one of our most pressing issues.

Services Sydney proposes to construct a new water reclamation, treatment and storage facility. That facility would be linked to the Sydney sewage reticulation network by new trunk main sewers at the points where the main trunk sewers connect each of the North Head, Bondi and Malabar sewage treatment plants. Water conduits would then return tertiary treated water to the base of Sydney's catchment dams to replace water otherwise needed for environmental flows. The potential benefits would include the avoidance of the need to construct a new dam, an increase in the water available for environmental flows, and the elimination of pollution in the ocean. The noisy and dirty sludge trucks that currently carry treated biosolids through the streets of Manly and beyond would also become a thing of the past.

The Services Sydney proposal stands in stark contrast to the approach currently being taken by Sydney Water through its Water Plan 21. Sydney Water simply promises to entrench the existing unsustainable system. Over the next 17 years Sydney Water will be paying the Environment Protection Authority a licence fee of \$25 million per year, or \$425m in total, to pump sewage into the ocean. It is time this money was spent on a sustainable solution. Obviously there are still many factors to be considered in Services Sydney's proposal. We need to be sure that the company's financial modelling is sound, and that it can be fully demonstrated that the proposal is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. However, on its face the proposal by Services Sydney represents an opportunity to address one of Sydney's most significant infrastructure problems.

To advance its proposal, Services Sydney has lodged an application with the National Competition Council to have Sydney Water's sewage transmission and interconnection

network listed as a declared service under the Commonwealth Trade Practices Act. Such declaration would mean that the company would be given the necessary access to establish the new platform. If the National Competition Council finds in favour of the application, it will then make a recommendation to the Premier that the service be declared. I have offered the company my in-principle support, and I urge the Government to take whatever steps are necessary to assist the company further develop its proposal. The Government needs to think far more laterally than it has done in the past.

Speakers: [Barr, Mr David](#).

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