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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SWCC congratulates WA Government for Yarragadee decision

Bunbury, WA, Wednesday, May 16, 2007: The South West Catchments Council (SWCC) congratulates the Premier Alan Carpenter and his Government for their astute decision to shelve the Water Corporation's plans to use the South West Yarragadee aquifer as a future water supply.

The WA Premier announced Western Australia's additional water source would be taken from a more viable option, a seawater desalination plant proposed for Taranto Road, just north of Binningup.

"Seawater desalination powered by renewable energy is clearly the best long term feasible and practical option for our State, along with more water recycling initiatives," Mr Carpenter said.

He went on to say that while the South West Yarragadee aquifer had effectively received environmental approval, it remained a source that was still reliant on climate and rainfall.

SWCC chairman Tony Brun applauded the decision and commented that the Labor Government had shown real leadership by listening to the community and the scientific consensus about risks related to large scale abstraction from the SW Yarragadee.

"The Premier has also used long term vision in taking practical steps to address issues with climate change by seeking renewable energy (non emission energy) to power the seawater desalination plant. This fits well with SWCC's vision of having the South West of WA recognized as one of Australia's "sustainability innovation" hotspots," Mr Brun said.

"SWCC still sees the SW Yarragadee as an extremely valuable environmental and economic resource, and as our submission to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) stated, we are not opposed to the extraction of water from SW Yarragadee, however we were concerned about the sustainability of the specific Water Corporation proposal."

"Extensive investigations and modeling compiled by scientific researchers and Natural Resource Management (NRM) professionals are not lost and now form the building blocks of a valuable information database to reveal the real sustainable potential of the Yarragadee aquifer."

"We hope the West Australian Government continues to invest in further research for an accurate understanding of this valuable resource and how it can be used for sustainable industry development in the South West. We don't see that this decision should impact on the Government's commitment to ensuring a sustainable water supply to the South West towns of Bridgetown, Manjimup, Nannup and Margaret River."

"SWCC sees sustainable water resource management as a major plank of its Regional NRM Strategy and looks forward to continuing its strong partnership with the WA Government in delivering positive outcomes in this area."

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