

AQUASURE UPDATE

22 DECEMBER 2009



As of today, we have been on site for 85 days.

An extraordinary amount has been achieved in that time. Above all else, I am pleased to report an excellent safety record. Sending our people home safe and well to their families every day is our priority and we are committed to continuing this record.

This week's update includes the latest aerial photograph of the site, which shows just how far work has progressed.

Nearly 700,000m³ of soil has been excavated, kept on site and used for new dune construction. Building sites for the future reverse osmosis and pre-treatment buildings have been excavated and pouring of concrete foundations has started.

Work is progressing well on excavating the 27 metre deep box-cut channel, which will provide access for the tunnel boring machine and allow construction of the seawater lift pump station.

In line with our commitment to minimise environmental impacts, our on-site environmental team is constantly monitoring dust, noise and water quality, in accordance with our Environmental Management Plan.

Hooded Plover nests have been identified and fenced off to ensure protection of this precious, threatened species.

Out on the water, marine research began recently and will continue into 2010.

As a part of our obligations, we need to conduct this research, which includes a range of biological surveys to help us confirm the best location for the intake and outlet structures, provide a baseline for ongoing marine monitoring when the plant is operational and ensure the project meets strict environmental conditions.

One component of our research involves baited underwater video surveys to help us further develop our understanding of deep sea fish and shark communities.

Baited surveys are common practice in marine surveying all over the world, including along the Victorian coast.

The baited surveys planned for this month were deferred, following consultation with a number of community groups about the preferred timing of this work. We are investigating other options and will keep the community up to date.

On the pipeline and underground power route, cultural heritage surveys are complete and the first 6km of the 84km alignment has been carefully cleared and graded in preparation for construction. The first of the 1.93 metre diameter pipes has been delivered, ready for installation in the new year.

Renovation work has started on our new Community Information Centre in Wonthaggi and we look forward to welcoming our first visitors in February.

In the meantime, our information centre at 1 McBride Avenue is still open for business.

Interest from people all across Victoria in working on the project has been very strong, with more than 7,000 applications received to date.

Thiess Degremont's recruitment team is in Wonthaggi conducting interviews for the first labour and trades roles on the project.

Hundreds more jobs will be advertised next year, so keep an eye out.

This will be our final update for 2009. On behalf of all involved with the Victorian Desalination Project, my very best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas and a prosperous 2010.

Chris Herbert
CEO, AquaSure

✓ FACT

The design of the marine intake structures will guard against any impact on the marine environment. Seawater will be drawn in at very low speeds – even small fish will be able to swim against the intake current – and a protective grill will ensure that larger marine life can't swim into the structure.

