



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

Minister for the Environment and Water Resources

T111/07

18 July 2007

SYDNEY BOREFIELD PROJECT TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY ASSESSED

Sydney's Kangaloon borefield project will require assessment under Australian Government environment legislation, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, announced today.

Mr Turnbull said the project requires assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) due to possible impacts on a nationally endangered ecological community, the *Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone*.

The EPBC Act provides for the protection of certain defined matters of national environmental significance (NES). The matters of NES include world and national heritage properties, wetlands of international importance, migratory species, nationally threatened species and ecological communities, nuclear actions, and the Commonwealth area.

“Any project likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance must be assessed and approved under the EPBC Act before it can go ahead,” Mr Turnbull said.

“The Kangaloon area supports the listed *Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone* ecological community. Following the results of trial pumping earlier this year, and review by a number of respected hydrologists, I have deemed that significant impacts on this listed ecological community could not be ruled out at this stage.”

The Sydney Catchment Authority is proposing to construct and operate a groundwater borefield in Kangaloon, near Sydney. This will entail extracting groundwater from a deep regional sandstone aquifer in the Southern Highlands.

In making his decision, the Minister noted the considerable concerns raised by the local residents of the Southern Highlands about the impacts and sustainability of the proposed borefield.

“My decision under the EPBC Act will ensure that the likely impacts of the project on the very defined matters protected under federal law will be understood and fully assessed before pumping from a permanent borefield can occur,” Mr Turnbull said.

Any other environment issues must be addressed by the NSW Government.

The project is undergoing an environmental assessment by the NSW Government and it is likely that the Australian Government's requirements will be incorporated in this process.

Further information including referral documentation as well as the controlled action declaration are available on the Department of the Environment and Water Resources web site at: www.environment.gov.au/epbc/

Media Contact: Brad Burke 02 6277 7640 or 0404 848 186