

Bill and Gail Blackley



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Great Artesian Basin Management Committee
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I wish to make a submission to the Great Artesian Basin Management Committee.

The G.A.B. would have to be one of the most valuable natural assets we have in Australia. Many rural towns and a large area of Australia's livestock industries are totally dependent on the G.A.B.

Our cattle properties N.E. of Wandoan are in an area not suitable for dams. The good quality shallow water of the precipice sandstone in our area makes it first option for stock and domestic use.

The success of the GABSI capping scheme of piping of the free-flowing bores out west and up north in stopping the waste of water, estimates, I believe to be 97%, should be expediated to cover all remaining free flowing bores.

The Gov. subsidies involved in this scheme should be continued. However, I believe the time has come to set a cut off date where all bores must be capped and piped. While for producers it is expensive piping and setting up troughs, the benefits far outweigh the expense. As much water as possible must be saved to try to get use and recharge more in balance to maintain sustainability.

The properties in recharge area need Government approval and assistance for removal for regrowth of timber. National parks and Forestry Area need to be included in this plan.

East of the Sural Basin Area, a lot of the recharge area, which were originally open grassland, is now wall to wall timber. This timber is sucking up the heavy rainfall events, preventing the infiltration of water to the recharge of the G.A.B.

This will need a common sense review of Queensland Tree Clearing Policy and not a political policy.

The policy of extending unlimited commercial use of the G.A.B. water to the resource sector is just plain dumb. Especially when other options are available, even if other options are more expensive.

The success of Origin Reedy Creek Field re-injection by gravity into the Precipice Sandstone has been outstanding. While expensive to treat the gas by-product water and needing close monitoring to maintain the quality of the water, the beneficial use of the CSG water has been a win win story. Monitoring has shown pressure increases in monitoring bores up to 100ks away in approx. 18months of injecting.

It is disappointing that Santos' Scotia Field east of Wandoan has been given approval to waste this same water by shandyng their gas by-product water at the rate of 70% G.A.B. water to 30% CSG water to allow it to irrigate salt tolerant grasses to get rid of CSG water.

I understand they have purchased 140 meg of Precipice Sandstone licence and have applied to the Government for another 100meg. licence also.

I believe this approval should be revised and Santos treat their water to make beneficial use of their CSG water as other CSG companies have had to do.

The long-term effects on the soil of using the saline water for irrigation has to be questionable.

The proposal by a Glencore subsidiary company called CTSCo (Carbon Transport and Storage) to inject CO₂ into the Precipice Sandstone aquifer 15klms west of Wandoan would have to be the stupidest proposal ever dreamt up.

CTSCo propose to capture the CO₂ from existing coal fired power stations and transport it to Wandoan and treat it by freezing and pressure treating it to become a "super-critical fluid" which apparently has a specific gravity of 50% of water, then inject it 1220 metres at 1800 PSI into the Precipice Sandstone aquifer which is 57 degrees and expect it to stop in a plume under the injection site. The "super-critical fluid" has a Ph of 3.

The main reason for targeting the Precipice Aquifer is because of its permeability to accept the 65,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year for 3 years for their trial.

The permeability is certainly there, demonstrated by Origin's injection at Reedy Creek, about 20ks to the south of the injection site.

The Wandoan town bores, 15klms to the East are the same depth as at the CO₂ injection site.

The Precipice Aquifer at CTSCo's injection site is 1,220 metres, however this same aquifer slopes upwards 60ks to the N.E. to come to the surface as springs and bogamosses.

We have a flowing bore in this area that tapped the Precipice Aquifer at 30metres.

How the hell they expect this super critical fluid 50% the specific gravity of water, to sit in a plume, in a highly permeable sloping aquifer and not mobilise and rise to the top to pollute the Precipice Sandstone Aquifer bores and springs is a mystery.

Forget the computer modelling that says it may be feasible. The "Common Sense" test needs to be applied to this project.

The G.A.B. , "the eight wonder to the world" , is too valuable a resource to be contaminated by such an acidic pollutant.

This project must be stopped.

When managing the G.A.B., the large capacity of the G.A.B. has to be balanced by return on the dollar of water used, and long term expected use, balanced with long term recharge rates.

Yours faithfully

Bill & Gail Blackley