

18/10/20

Parliament of Victoria
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Sirs and Madams,

Government's Response to COVID-19: South East Water

Firstly, I have to make clear that I am not and have never worked for South East Water. I also have no desire to do so.

My core concern is the multiple failures of South-East Water to actually respond to the pandemic. I have previously raised my concerns with that body, but got no fruitful response.

Three issues:

- It is internationally accepted that personal hygiene is a crucial issue in minimising spread of the virus. South East Water did nothing to provide a discount on water rates during the pandemic. Even a \$50.00 discount would be a significant advantage to some households. With a huge ongoing and guaranteed cash flow, this large corporatised public body can borrow funds at less 1%. Why no discount?
- South East Water apparently did nothing to expedite its ongoing maintenance and capital works programs during the pandemic, to encourage local employment. Why ever not?
- No simple extension was made to the due date of water bills. Why ever not? My last bill required payment within eight business days of its receipt!! Whatever was the big hurry, given the entity's huge ongoing and guaranteed cash flow?

I have also raised with South East Water why it had not done anything to secure cheaper accommodation for the handful of staff actually physically working at its expensive offices in Frankston. Such savings could be usefully passed on to consumers. The entity declined to canvass the issue with me. Perhaps you can find out what is going on.

I note that many on the South-East Water Board appear to be neither technically qualified, nor have particularly relevant expertise, nor tangibly empathetic to society's changed expectations. Whyever then would we want them still on the Board for Virus Part 3?

During well over three decades in the VPS, I seldom observed such inaction in any Government body.

My valid comments are clear and brief, and I have no need or time to make a personal appearance before the Committee.

I would however appreciate an acknowledgement, and shall read the final report with interest.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Morey, B.A., Dip. Eng., Grad. Dip. Hum., Dip Financial Markets, Graduate Diploma in
Applied Finance and Investment

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