

# GLADSTONE – FITZROY PIPELINE PROJECT



## project update

December 2007

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) commenced planning on the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline project in 2006, to ensure a reliable supply of bulk water for the region. Up to 30,000 megalitres (ML) of water each year could be drawn from the Fitzroy River via the project, to provide a dual water source for GAWB's supply network.

While the Gladstone region has sufficient water for the short-term, low inflows to Awoonga Dam since 2003's drought-breaking Cyclone Beni and strong industrial growth have signalled a need to pursue a second source of water to secure a reliable, long-term water supply for the region.

By preparing for the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline now – locating a preferred corridor, designing the pipeline and gaining the necessary government approvals, GAWB will be ready to commence construction of the pipeline as soon as low dam levels or increased demand trigger the need. ▀



*Gladstone's Awoonga Dam*

### Long-term planning for regional water security

GAWB's vision for long-term security of water supply is one shared by many within the region. GAWB has worked closely with many stakeholders to develop appropriate water supply strategies within the region. These include the Central Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy and GAWB's own Strategic Water Plan.

#### Central Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy

The Central Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy (CQRWSS) was initiated in response to prolonged severe drought in Central Queensland, from which it became evident that a regional, whole-of-government approach was the most efficient way of meeting water supply challenges.

The strategy area, covering 153,000 square kilometres, includes the Fitzroy River Basin and the coastal streams of the Capricorn Coast and the Gladstone region.



The CQRWSS involved extensive consultation with many stakeholders over several years, and was finalised in December 2006 following a public consultation period on the draft strategy.

A reservation of 30,000 ML per annum (ML/a) from the Fitzroy River was made for GAWB in the CQRWSS. A pipeline between Gladstone and the Fitzroy River was also part of the regional solution set out in the 50 year strategy.

#### GAWB's Strategic Water Plan

The Strategic Water Plan, released in November 2004, was a collaborative effort between GAWB, government, industry and the community. The plan, developed over more than 12 months, sets out GAWB's strategic options to best meet the region's water needs.

The plan considered all available water sources and analysed them in terms of cost, quality, environmental and social impacts and reliability. Options such as demand management (water restrictions), recycling, new dams and weirs, industrial cooling conversions and desalination were considered.

With recycling opportunities all implemented in Gladstone, and water already being used very efficiently after the last drought, the Strategic Water Plan concluded that a pipeline supplying 30,000 ML/a from the Fitzroy River was the preferred option. ▀



*Awoonga Dam at its lowest level in 2002*

## GAWB's revised Drought Management Plan

GAWB recently released its revised Drought Management Plan (DMP) after revisiting the way it calculates worst-case inflow predictions for Awoonga Dam. The DMP explains how GAWB must assess possible drought conditions, and when it must make notifications and take actions in response.

The previous DMP assumptions were based on the average of the ten worst consecutive inflow years on record (69,243 ML/a per annum). On review, GAWB found that since 2004 average inflows into the dam have been around two thirds lower than this.

Inflow assumptions in the revised DMP are now based on the annual average of the worst three-year inflow sequence, currently 2004-2007, giving a revised inflow assumption of 23,633 ML/a.

GAWB will review this worst-case three year sequence following the 2007/08 wet season. Regular review of the DMP is vital to ensure GAWB can assess drought risks and take action to protect the system's capacity to supply water to the region.



With the revised inflow assumptions, the region is facing a situation where, if additional water supply options are not investigated, there is the possibility of running out of water by 2011.

The process that GAWB uses to identify the occurrence of drought and the actions that will be triggered to reduce the consequences of this are outlined in GAWB's DMP.

GAWB defines drought as a period of time where, taking into consideration the worst predicted annual inflows, water stored in Lake Awoonga could be insufficient to meet demand at some time during the next five years.

GAWB's preferred approach to dealing with drought is to focus on supply augmentation rather than imposing water restrictions.

Water restrictions come into play when there are no other options, but by forward planning to secure an additional, reliable water source, GAWB is working towards implementing alternatives for the region.

GAWB's revised DMP can be viewed online at: [www.gawb.qld.gov.au](http://www.gawb.qld.gov.au).

## Final Terms of Reference released

The final Terms of Reference (ToR) for the proposed Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were issued to GAWB by the Coordinator-General on 30 October 2007, after a four-week public comment period during September 2007. Submissions were received during this time from a number of government agencies and community organisations.

The ToR are essentially the 'rule book' for the preparation of the project's EIS. The EIS will examine a wide range of issues including environmental, social and economic impacts associated with the proposed pipeline. The Coordinator-General's decision to declare the project a 'significant project' requiring an EIS highlights the environmental significance

of the area and the desire for a rigorous and open impact assessment of the environmental, social and economic effects of the project.

A team of experts has been working on studies since early 2007 that will be used for the project's EIS. The EIS is expected to be complete by early 2008, when it will be released to the community for comment before being assessed by the Queensland and Commonwealth governments.

To find out more about the EIS process for the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline or to view the project's final ToR visit: [www.coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au](http://www.coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au).



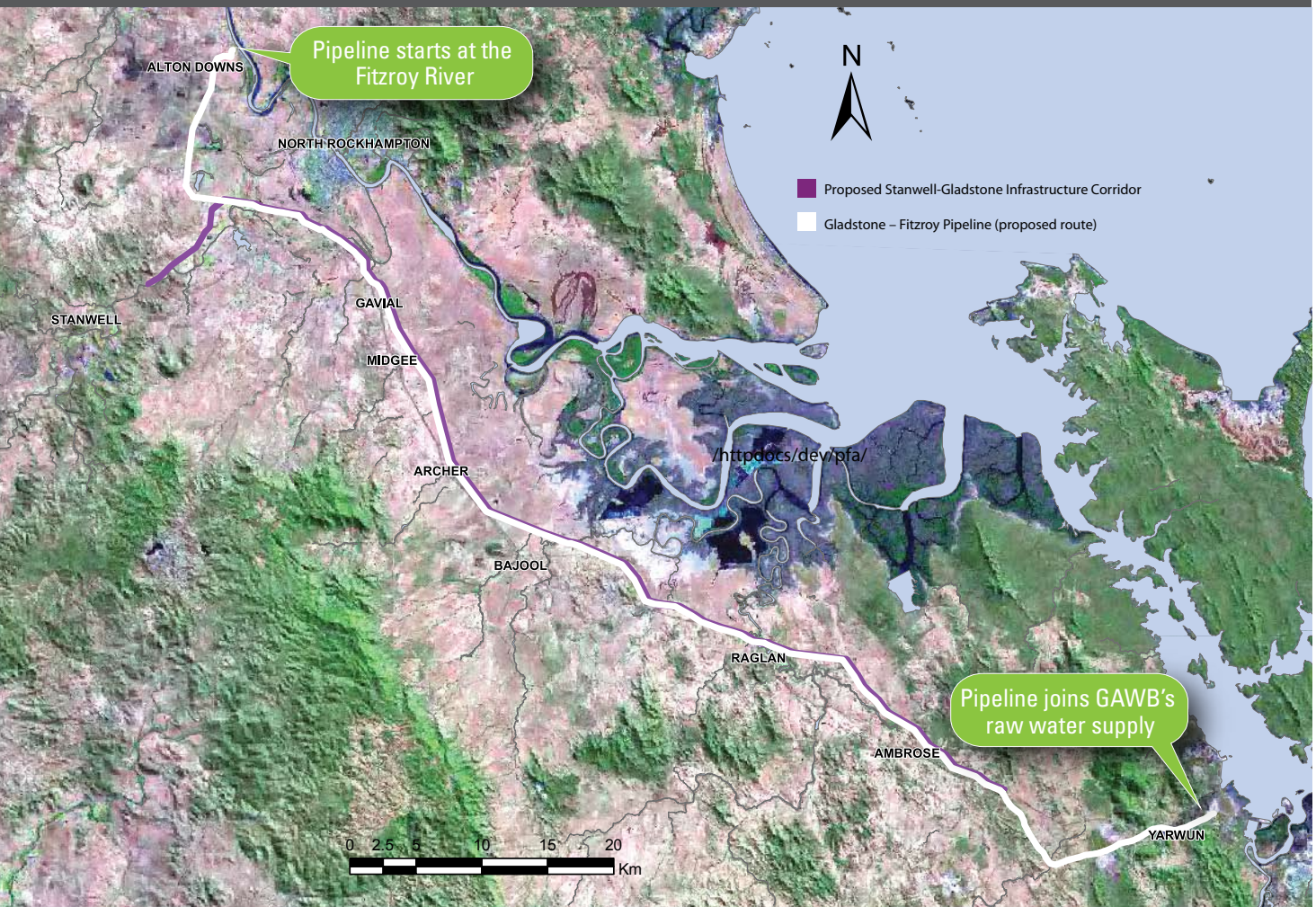
# Route selection

While the details of the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline route are not yet finalised, it is anticipated that the majority of its length will run within the proposed Stanwell-Gladstone Infrastructure Corridor (SGIC). The SGIC is a State Government initiative to coordinate infrastructure in the region. It was publicly notified in 2006, with subsequent consultation in mid 2007.

To the north, commencing at the Fitzroy River, GAWB will be seeking a grant of easement to connect with the SGIC. At the southern end, the pipeline will continue through the

Gladstone State Development Area (GSDA) to connect with GAWB's existing water infrastructure. GAWB is examining land acquisition alternatives in these areas.

GAWB has been working closely with the community, local councils and industry over recent months in carrying out technical investigations and gathering feedback to locate a preferred pipeline corridor. This feedback and the results of preliminary investigations are being considered in determining the route for the proposed pipeline. ➤



## GAWB selects contractor for Early Contractor Involvement

GAWB recently called for tenders for contractor and design teams to develop a detailed, costed design for the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline project under an Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) contract. Despite the current tight conditions of the infrastructure market, seven tenders were received, surpassing government and industry expectations and reaffirming the significance of the pipeline project.

The quality of the tenders was high, and following a rigorous selection process, GAWB is now finalising matters with a preferred contractor. GAWB is very pleased with the interest shown in the region, and believes the flexible, cooperative style of working required under the ECI contract will ensure good outcomes for customers and the community. ➤

## Community consultation

Since announcing the project in June, GAWB has been in close consultation with landowners, local councils and industry. This will continue as GAWB prepares the project's EIS, before its release to the community in early 2008 for a formal public comment period.

If you have a question about the project, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the project team. ➤

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# Baseline studies

Baseline studies are well underway for the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline project's EIS. To inform these studies and help establish these baseline conditions, fieldwork was undertaken in the project area during August 2007, and in some cases is still continuing. Fieldwork was undertaken for the following areas:

## **Landscape and visual assessment**

Observations were made along the pipeline alignment to identify the significant landscape features in the project area and the sensitive receptors to any landscape or visual changes that may occur as part of the project.

## **Air quality**

Data from air quality monitoring sites will be used to assess any potential impact that the construction or operation of the pipeline may have in these areas.

## **Noise**

Noise monitoring was undertaken along the pipeline route to gain an understanding of the baseline noise environment in the area. This included the placement of noise loggers near the proposed sites for infrastructure associated with the project.

## **Fauna**

A number of species have been observed in the study area. A specific monthly fauna survey being carried out is focused on a bird called the Capricorn Yellow Chat. The Capricorn Yellow Chat is listed as 'Critically Endangered' under the Commonwealth *Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, while the species is listed as 'Vulnerable' under the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. Yellow Chat surveys will continue on a monthly basis until early 2008 to account for seasonal variations in the birds' use of habitat.

A seasonal bird survey has also been undertaken for other bird species. The main fauna survey in the study area will occur over two weeks in November, pending appropriate warm conditions.

## **Flora**

Flora surveys were undertaken over a two week period at a number of properties in the project area where there is likely to be significant vegetation, including species listed as threatened under State and Federal Legislation.

Of particular significance in the study area is the presence of 'Semi-evergreen vine thickets of the Brigalow Belt and Nandewar Regions'. Patches of this Threatened Ecological Community exist in the project area and are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

## **Geology and Soils**

Test pits were completed along the pipeline route to identify the geotechnical conditions to inform the detailed design. In parallel with this process, samples were taken from selected test pits to enable the geological and soil characteristics to be described in the EIS.

This included the collection of selected samples in high risk Potential Acid Sulfate Soil (PASS) zones. These samples were then sent for laboratory analysis to establish where PASS occur along the alignment and enable appropriate mitigation measures to be specified in the EIS.

A detailed PASS investigation will be conducted prior to the commencement of construction and a PASS management plan will be implemented during construction. ▽



## Contact

For more information about the Gladstone-Fitzroy Pipeline project:

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