

**Response to review comments provided by Dr Barry Clark of Anchor Environmental in December 2015**

**General Comments (i.e. Points 1-34)**

1. Action for Arcus Gibb. We were never asked to rank the sites in this document.
2. We are pleased that our objectivity is clear.
3. We are pleased that the reviewer found our report to be technically, scientifically and professionally credible. We thank them for the suggestions that have further strengthened the report.
4. The assessment criteria were not developed by us but by Arcus Gibb. These are explained in a document that has been prepared by A. Gibb and accompanies our report. Following the suggestion of the reviewer where possible impacts have now been assessed with and without mitigation and this is clearly indicated in the assessment tables.
5. We are pleased that the reviewer found the report complete and without errors.
6. In the previous versions of the report we attempted to provide all the relevant information so that the decision making authorities could make their own decision based on our information. Following the recommendations of the reviewer and discussions with others in the field, in our revision we have endeavored to clarify the preferred options from a marine ecology perspective. In addition, impacts have been assessed with and without mitigation measures and the mitigation section has been rewritten.
7. At the reviewers suggestion we have strengthened the report by clearly stating what the preferred options are. We are pleased that the reviewer found that the report addresses alternative views.
8. We are pleased that the style of the report was found to be appropriate and accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike.
9. We thank the reviewer for their comment and the detailed suggestions that they made. We feel that the report has been strengthen by these suggestions and detailed responses to each are provided below.

**Specific Comments (i.e. Points 1-9)**

1. The legal framework applicable to this project is the one that was in place at the time when the application was filed. As such this suggestion cannot be implemented.
2. Correction made.
3. This comment is noted but this is an issue for Arcus Gibb as we simply implemented the criteria developed by them.
4. Thank you for pointing this out. The correction has been made.
5. Correction made.
6. We agree. The various forms of disturbance that could manifest at each site are dealt with in more detail in Section 3 of the report.
7. Correction made.
8. Correction made.
9. Correction made.

10. I cannot find an 'and' that is appropriate to delete.
11. This information cannot be included as it was not available when the report was prepared. If this change was to be made the entire report would have to be updated with information post 2012.
12. Correction made.
13. Please refer to reply 1 above.
14. It is felt that this heading is important and so it has been retained.
15. Please refer to reply 1 above.
16. I cannot find a reference to operational impacts in this paragraph.
17. The reviewer is misunderstanding the text. The intertidal area is not a favourable site for a desalination plant. Rather, as explained in the text, the site falls into the category rated as being 5<sup>th</sup> best out of 15 categories due to the large sediment surface area present in the intertidal zone.
18. Correction made.
19. Correction made. The text has been clarified.
20. Correction made.
21. Please refer to reply 17 above.
22. Please refer to reply 1 above.
23. We are simply reporting the findings of (Prestedge et al. 2008a).
24. Please refer to reply 1 above.
25. Correction made. The text has been altered to clearly reflect the preferred option.
26. Please refer to reply 11 above.
27. Based on the assessment criteria supplied by Argus Gibb these two options do result in the same rating. Nonetheless, the deep option is clearly preferential from a marine ecology perspective. As such, text has been added to clearly draw attention to the fact that the off-shore release is the preferred option.
28. Thank you - this slipped through from a previous version of the report. Correction made.
29. Please refer to reply 1 above.
30. Correction made.
31. Thank you for this comment. We have reconsidered the confidence ratings applied and made changes where appropriate.
32. The section on mitigation measures has been rewritten to make it clearer. Mitigation measures are now presented per site.
33. Please refer to reply 11 above.
34. Please refer to reply 1 above.

Signed as completed: 22 Feb 2016

