

Our family have owned a farm on Gills Road since the late 1940's. Last summer the artesian bore stopped flowing for the first time ever. It was very disturbing to note that corresponding to this happening the irrigators were going day and night on the Sweetwater Block on Sandhills Road.

Our family's concern is the artesian bore at present servicing the farm is at risk of running dry much sooner than it did last summer if the removal of such huge quantities of water are consented to.

If this happens as a result of consent being granted, what recourse do land owners have to carry out the day to day running of the farm eg filling water troughs, watering gardens and supplementing house tanks ? From what I have read the risk of damaging the aquifer or contaminating it with sea water is a likely probability. Such damage would render it useless forever as a farm water source.

Personally I am confused and unsure that sufficient knowledge about this aquifer and how it works, especially since the original lake area protecting it has been virtually eradicated. What guarantee can be given that this wont happen. The original measurement was reported as being miscalculated by more than a metre. This does not instil confidence that there is sufficient evidence to approve granting consents to take the requested volumes of water. Such quantities will have a huge and detrimental effect on existing land owners.

My concern is, who will be held accountable and what compensation will be available if the aquifer is damaged. Farms

could be rendered useless and consequently valueless. What are the chances of land slumps? Flooding? The community ruined. The Far North food bowl risks becoming a salt lake. Nature has already been significantly interfered with, coupled with climate change and human miscalculations. The granting of these consents are a catastrophe in the making.

I strongly oppose the taking of such huge volumes of water from the aquifer.