

# **Amended Submission to Kempsey Shire Council Comments on the *Stuarts Point Sewerage Scheme***

I wish to submit the following 5 comments to the Kempsey Shire Council on the Stuarts Point Sewerage Scheme (SPSS).

## **1. Proposed Removal of the Existing Septic Tanks**

I understand that it is intended to leave the demolished septic tanks in the ground after being pumped out and the residual waste sterilised.

I believe that the residual waste remaining in the broken tanks may not be fully sterilised and could potentially leach into the water table. This could happen due to factors outside of the Shire's control such as a bad batch of lime, incorrect dosage and incorrect work practices,

To mitigate this potential risk, I would like the Shire to consider removing the septic tanks in their entirety after they are pumped out and then sterilise the remaining sandy soil before backfilling with clean fill. I believe this extra task will provide more certainty in the removal of sewer waste.

It is acknowledged that this extra work would increase the cost of the project however it is expected to be minimal compared to the overall cost of the sewer scheme.

## **2. Proposed Floodwater Warning System**

I understand there is provision to temporarily cap the riser pipe to the overflow relief gully to prevent sewer waste surging up into and contaminating any flood waters.

As some of the residents may not be familiar with this system or the risks to health, I believe that in a flooding emergency, the majority of occupants may omit to cap their org and subsequently may forget to remove the cap after any flood waters have subsided.

I request the Shire to consider providing a flood warning system to notify the residents of their obligation to cap and uncap the org. Again, I acknowledge that there is an extra cost involved, but any additional costs should be a very small percentage compared to the overall cost of the sewer scheme.

## **3. Electricity Service Upgrades for the Operational Sewer**

It is understood the electricity supply does not fall within the scope of the SPSS and is covered under the Stuarts Point Structure Plan (SPSS). However, I strongly believe the electricity service upgrades are required, at the very least for the sewer system once commissioned and operational.

The electrical service does not currently meet the needs of the existing residents as Stuarts Point experiences blackouts during floods for up to 5 days at a time.

It is noted that the proposed pressure sewer system tank can hold up to approx. 2 days of waste. In the event of the above scenario happening, it is believed the health and amenity for both the residents and the Shire will be untenable.

It is strongly recommended the Shire to consider upgrading the electricity services, at the very least to ensure that the sewer system once operational is fully functional and fit for purpose to meet the needs of both the residents and the Shire.

#### **4. Provide Stormwater and Floodwater Infrastructure to the Existing Village**

I understand that the stormwater and floodwater infrastructure does not fall within the scope of the SPSS and is covered under the SPSS. However, I strongly believe the stormwater and floodwater Infrastructure needs to be provided as an integral part of the sewer system once commissioned and operational.

Given that significant areas of the existing village are situated below the floodplain, it has been unequivocally demonstrated that sustained, multi-day inundation sometimes lasting up to 5 days is a recurring reality. The decision to persist with a 'do-nothing' policy - both historically and currently, especially following the investment in a sewer system may constitute a failure of duty on behalf of the Shire.

I strongly argue for the Shire to reconsider its position and make the provision for both stormwater and floodwater infrastructure to be completed ready for commissioning of the sewer system, rather than some arbitrarily future point in time.

We know that the Shire can do this, and make it happen, for the existing residents of Stuarts Point who deserve better.

#### **5. Ameliorate the High Cost of Sewer Charges to the Ratepayers of Stuarts Point**

The proposed sewer charges being proposed (approximately \$1,800 per year per property) are disproportionate given the socio-economic realities of most people living in the area.

To help relieve this burden, is it possible for the Shire to find a way to assist the residents of Stuarts Point with any financial hardship payments or subsidies?

How does the Shire and NSW State Government intend to make Stuarts Point more attractive to future homeowners with these exorbitant user pays added costs?

I appreciate the Shire taking the time to review and consider my comments.

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