

IPART Submission Re: Sewerage Plant Cobaki Lakes

I am writing this statement in response to the Cobaki Lakes Development Sewerage Plant Northern Waters Solutions (LEDA) application. Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge the Aboriginal Elders the traditional custodians of the land, and pay my respects to the elders both past and present. I trust that the information henceforth is treated respectfully and meets the Aboriginal Elders approval.

All my life I have grown up in the Tweed Shire community, firstly living at Terranora until the age of 5, and then moved to Piggabeen in the year of 2003. Currently I am studying at Southern Cross University at Coolangatta, [REDACTED], in the Bachelor of Biomedical Science. It is my goal in life to have a positive impact on my local and broader community; giving back to those who have supported me throughout my life thus far, and being passionate and helping in anyway I can.

Firstly, to establish what our community is about and what we strive for I have included our values and mission:

The Tweed Shire and Council hold the values to look after the people and places, whilst being passionate about what we approach. We also care about each other, choose to be here and are in this together, as well as putting back into our community so that Tweed can be even better tomorrow. We as Tweed Shire see our mission to make Tweed be recognised for its desirable lifestyle, strong community, unique character and environment, as well as the opportunities the residents enjoy (<http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/TheTweed>).

As a long time community member, I can say that this sewerage plant will be removing from the local and broader community of the Tweed Shire, that of open space and recreational activities, taking away from our core values and mission. Not to mention the impact it will have on the local wildlife, ecosystems and natural environment as well as community health and wellbeing. Tweed Shire as a community also prides itself in working with the local Indigenous population, helping protect their heritage and lands. This sewerage plant takes away from our mission of looking after the people and the places here, and changes the lifestyle and unique character and environment of our community. Therefore, I am proposing that the sewerage plant should remain in the development site of the Cobaki Lakes development area, rather than impacting a community that will not be using the sewerage plant. It is also my concern that the information we have received has not been clear, with local community members being confused about what is being developed and where.

The local Piggabeen and Cobaki areas are buzzing with native wildlife. More often than not, Tawny Frog Mouth Owls, Wedge Tailed Eagles, Kangaroos, Echidnas, Wallabies, Pheasants, Black Swans, Jabiru birds, Loggerhead Turtle, Possums, Bandicoots, Quails, and Goannas inhabit the local premise, and only to mention a few. Many clubs and society's come out to our valleys to bird watch, enjoy our valley that is near golden beaches of the Tweed, and see our native birds, plants, insects, reptiles, mammals, as well as the local ecosystems, surrounding bush, rainforests, habitats and the marine life in the creeks. (please see link for

endangered species in our area:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/cmaSearchResults.aspx?SubCmaId=14>)

As I am sure this reader is aware, it must also be noted that any imbalances to any ecosystem can cause major consequences and implications to our natural environment, and the environment in which our community prides itself in. The Tweed Shire prides itself in the natural environment in which it is situated, and promotes its gas-field free eligibility as well as working with the Indigenous population. We try to help protect their heritage and lands, and to see it harmed, mistreated or damaged (due to potential malfunctions, especially considering the recent natural disasters), would be disrespectful to our local community and the time we invest in it. The sewerage plant development in our local community would be breaching our values and mission, in which we, as a community want to look after the people and places here, and have a unique environment.

Upon reflection of the recent local devastation caused by cyclone Debbie that wreaked havoc along the East Coast of Queensland and Northern NSW, future contingencies surrounding a sewerage plant are inevitable. Floodwaters crossed many properties in the Piggabeen and Cobaki Valley's and that doesn't exclude the potential land for the sewerage plant. The driving range is situated on a flood plain and low-lying land that backs onto a creek that feeds into the Tweed Shire area. The Tweed Waters are used for fishing, boating, swimming, surfing and other water sport and recreational activities. Floodwater could impact the sewerage plant which would impact everyone downstream and in particular the local community and environment, with contamination and damage to wildlife, ecosystems, children, plants, livestock and the sea-life. This concern for "sanitary sewer overflows" during heavy rain, and flooding periods, is legitimate, as it will impact wildlife, ecosystems, the environment and the people of our Piggabeen community and the Greater Tweed Shire Community. Once again, this is imposing upon our community's values and mission. In the event of an emergency disaster due to flooding, any emergency plans set in place would be unable to be implemented as they would be unable to access the site due to floodwaters cutting road access and irreversible damage could not be prevented.

The neighbouring property to the potential sewerage plant development is a function and wedding reception, known as the Abbey. This is a place where people of the community and people outside of our community come to celebrate the beauty of life, where people get married whilst enjoying the pristine views that we as a community pride ourselves in, overlooking the valley and out to the mountain ranges of the back of Murwillumbah. Personally, having grown up here, it has been my dream to get married there one day in my community area and with my community. Sadly however, I know personally a sewerage plant neighbouring this function hall would make me choose elsewhere. This is because a sewerage plant will ruin the aesthetics of the local function hall and gardens, as well as preventing interaction and promotion of our local community and all it has to offer. Not to mention how the aesthetics will be degraded to the local joggers, cyclist and families, who admire the scenic surrounds daily.

Concerning real estate, there will be an affect on our surrounding community due to stigma attached to a local sewerage plant. Upon research, many people say it smells, can be noisy at times, causes more traffic due to the maintenance requirements, and isn't aesthetically appealing. Hence, this can reduce people's quality of life, which is a risk our community

would not be willing to take. Furthermore, the roads in our area are not adequate even for our rural traffic, so the development, maintenance and vehicles required to attend this facility will ruin our roads and cause unwanted costs and inconveniences to our community.

Furthermore, on living near a sewerage plant, people who live nearby have claimed that on certain days there is distinct smell. As I am a currently a biomedical science student, it is to be noted that smells are certain chemicals, and some of which are harmful to inhale. There is research stating that the quality of life and overall life satisfaction from living near treatment plants is unsatisfactory not to mention the potential health implications. Research is not clear or easily accessible to our community on these topics, and it is my concern that there is potential danger to my community's health and overall wellbeing.

The Piggabeen community pride themselves in the fact that although rural and small, we still provide events and entertainment not just for us, but the broader Tweed Shire. Once a month, a local market is held, promoting the farmers and their produce in the area, as well as encouraging community involvement and connection. Not to mention the fundraisers and community evenings held, along with toddler play groups and Tae Kwon Do classes all held in our local and historic hall. As a community, the sewerage plant will be tainting our beautiful countryside aesthetically, making the broader community less willing to become involved due to the stigma and potential affects of a sewerage plant.

As a community, we have no guarantee that there will not be malfunctions, spillages in floods, odour leaks, or damage to our natural wildlife, ecosystems and flora. This is disrespectful to the Piggabeen and Cobaki Community, and not to mention the Tweed Shire. As was stated previously, it is felt that this will also be disrespectful to our Tweed Shire community and Indigenous community, due to the implications it can have on our local lands and Australian wildlife and plants. We pride ourselves in the fact we have natural landscapes (including the well known Mt Warning and surrounding national parks) and stand by the fact that we want to be recognisable by our lifestyle, environment and character. Therefore, to emphasise, the Sewerage Plant for Cobaki Lakes should remain within the development site and not spread into communities who don't want it or use it.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]