

## **Part – Submission re Cobaki Estate Development**

We wish to object to the proposal by Northern Water Solutions Pty Ltd for a sewage treatment plant on the site of the Piggabeen Golf Range, across Piggabeen Road from the proposed housing estate.

Our objections refer to issues of public interest as provided for under S.10(4)(f) of the Water Industry Competition Act 2006.

Tweed Shire Council, in the past, refused a housing entitlement on this block on the grounds that the area adjoins Piggabeen Creek and is flood prone. Surely this is of crucial consideration for such a facility. In the recent floods the Murwillumbah treatment plant spilled raw sewage into the Tweed River. Such an occurrence would be an environmental disaster for the nearby Piggabeen/Cobaki creek system which flows into Cobaki Lakes and Cobaki Broadwater, often referred to as the nursery for the Tweed River. Residents of the upper parts of Piggabeen valley have expended a great deal of money, time and energy on improving the water quality of Piggabeen Creek via landcare projects, Council's Fish Friendly Farm Program and riparian zone rehabilitation. The flow-on effects of this work would be jeopardised by having a sewage treatment works on the bank of Piggabeen Creek.

Tweed Shire Council ratepayers have already paid for costly upgrades to facilitate the integration of the Cobaki Estate into the existing sewerage network. This last minute proposal, if approved, would make those costs, already expended, a total waste of public money. What assets and financial backing does this company have? What guarantees are there that this facility will be operated and maintained by the company in the longer term? Clearly the ongoing operations of such a treatment plant will depend largely upon a projected revenue stream from households purchasing blocks on the estate. If such projections are not met then the "economic model" falls apart, to a point where the developer could bail out by putting Northern Water Supplies Pty Ltd into receivership. Given that it is hard to imagine being able to sell an uneconomic sewage treatment plant, who picks up the pieces? No doubt Tweed Shire Council would be expected to assume responsibility. Therefore the sewerage system for the estate should be incorporated into the Council's network as already provided for.

Sewage plants are usually hidden away in industrial areas so that they do not impact on local residents. This incredible proposal will hide it from the sight of residents of the Cobaki Estate Development, but will prominently expose it to all users of Piggabeen Road. Local residents expect that their properties will be devalued as a result. This disregard for surrounding residents is not acceptable. The resultant noise, odour and appearance of such a treatment plant are totally out of character with the surrounding environment. Again this exemplifies disrespect for the residents of Piggabeen.

Our understanding is that dry matter from the treatment plant would be trucked from the site using Piggabeen Road. Previous experience has taught us that Piggabeen Road is not wide enough or of sufficient standard to cope with this additional activity and represents a road safety issue for road users.

Private sewage treatment plants are not generally associated with housing developments. We believe there is significant public disbenefit from the proposed facility. Therefore we object strongly to this proposal.

Noel and Jan Fletcher.

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