

Submission in opposition to amendment application by Solo Water re Catherine Hill Bay

I consider that the amendment application by Solo Water represents a significant departure from the existing license which restricts discharge of all liquid treated effluent to within the boundaries of the Beaches estate.

The amendment application proposes now that up to 162,000 litres per day of liquid discharge would flow outside of the development estate and to the public creek at Catherine Hill Bay and potentially from there to the lagoon and then potentially onto the beach at Catherine Hill Bay.

The potential for grave disruption to the natural existing environment is huge. Any such change must be subjected to detailed assessment relating to environmental impact, public health and safety, odour, noise, landscape, bushfire management planning, visual impact, drainage.

I am hugely concerned at the risk of sewer overflows. Children regularly enjoy swimming in the creek/lagoon water when it often breaks through to the beach after heavy rain. At the present, LMCC often have to intervene to dig a channel to the sea to allow sand to wash in to close off the lagoon entry – otherwise the lagoon becomes septic with still water conditions.

Aside from the unknown health effects of treated effluent becoming part of this water source which is often on the beach and being played in by all ages of people, I am hugely concerned that, with significant extra water intake due to up to 162,000 litres of treated discharge a day, this will mean that the lagoon will almost permanently flow onto the beach and will bring unexpected health and environmental impacts. A full assessment is required before any such permission is granted.

There must have been a desirable reason for the initial approval to have required all treated effluent to be retained within the Beaches development, and this should not be changed merely to allow a developer to maximise profit and be able to sell off additional land at the expense of public and environmental health and safety. This smacks of a developer saying one thing to obtain initial approval and then seeking to shirk responsibility and foist potential and significant problems onto someone else's backyard.

The status quo ought to be retained. I note in this regard that there is no proposal to send the discharge into the National Park at Moonee beach - and assume that this would not be allowed by National Parks and Wildlife Service. Equally it should not be allowed to come onto public land into waterways which regularly spill out to become public swimming places.

There is no guarantee that the level of sewage processing will remain high and that fecal matter will not be included in the liquid discharge.

This amendment application is one to potentially pollute the local environment and harm the health of local children and adults who enjoy swimming at the beach. The risk is too significant to allow the amendment. At the very least there ought to be a full environmental impact assessment, and this should not be treated as merely an amendment to an existing REF. I feel very strongly that this amendment application ought to be denied.

Michelle White

