

Re: Catherine Hill Bay

Objection to the Variation of License requested by Solo Water Pty Ltd

Current Approved Licence 16\_035

From: Sue and Peter Ehinger , [REDACTED]

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Why should there be a change made to this license that would allow polluting water to be discharged into a creek and lagoon close to a popular surf beach even be considered?

If you know the area at all you would be aware that it would stagnate there until heavy rain or king tides would allow eventual flushing into the sea

Catherine Hill Bay is a pristine beach used by locals and families from Nords Wharf, Murrays Beach, Chain Valley Bay, Summerland Point and Gwandalan as well as by visitors and tourists staying at Raffertys Resort and in the many holiday houses for rent in the area. It is a State listed Heritage Township, one of only two such listed towns in NSW.

## **1. Ecological and Heritage Listing impacts**

- Stagnation of the downgraded treated sewage leading to mosquito and rat infestation and therefore increased health risks to the community.
- The environmental damage to the area would be serious, possibly irreversible especially if there is a system failure.
- Should there be a system failure, untreated sewerage would inevitably drain into the sea around the beach and flagged swimming area.
- The above would threaten tourism and beach usage.
- The Heritage Listing may be threatened.

The approved application allowed no discharge of liquid of any kind into the environment outside the residential development area. The licence was granted on this basis.

The operator now seeks a variation that will allow them to discharge more than 162,000 litres a day into the environment **outside** of the development area. The discharge will be in a different catchment area to the process plant, into a "wetland" and stream that ends up on the beach at Catherine Hill Bay. Yet the applicant states that "The additional flows due to SDRW release are unlikely to be significant under the proposed release management system".

## **2. Issues relating to the requested variation.**

- The current licence 16\_035 uses a reverse osmosis system in the treatment of sewage. This variation application proposes to downgrade this process such that there will be so called 'dry release' matter

released into the environment; ***an environment that is outside the approved development area.***

- 162,000 litres would be discharged into a very small creek that becomes a lagoon on a pristine beach. Rarely does this lagoon break through into the sea. When the sea is too rough or dangerous children frequently play in this lagoon.
- This 'dry release' is supposed to be released when it matches 'the beach lagoon outflow'. However the lagoon is rarely open to the sea.
- An independent environmental impact study has not been conducted into this new variation so the operator cannot claim that there will be no significant impact on the environment. The original application did not address this issue as there was to be no discharge into the environment at all!
- Should there be a system failure, untreated faecal matter would collect in the wetland area. Such system failures are not uncommon eg: Baxter Park in Nords Wharf that fails from time to time. Who will be responsible for the cleanup? Whose insurance will pay? This would be costly. Would it even be possible to sanitise the area so there are no health risks to swimmers and locals? The health risks could be ongoing and unpleasant for the locals.
- Rats are attracted to sewage and carry vectors for various diseases that affect humans. Mosquitoes carry Ross River Fever and other viruses.
- Children playing in the lagoon who have open cuts or wounds may be in danger of them becoming septic.

### **In conclusion**

We request that Solo Water Pty Ltd do the responsible thing and commit to the previous arrangement or truck the effluent to Swansea/Belmont for deep sea discharge. If not, in later years we will mourn the loss of our beautiful Australian environment and pristine beaches we are so famous for. As we have so few heritage listed villages in NSW it would be amazingly careless to lose one of them through our negligence.

Yours sincerely,

Sue and Peter Ehinger