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Submission: Our main concern for the application of a licence for a Sewage Treatment Plant and Water Recycling Facility in Cooranbong is the chosen site for this utility (617 Freemans Drive) which is near the centre of our town and near long established existing houses as well as recently built homes. It is only a short distance from a preschool, community centre, church and shops. The smaller Pitt Town and Wyee utilities are nowhere near the centre of a town or existing closely built up areas. No matter how sophisticated the technology, to place such an installation taking up 3½ acres (including large tanks, buildings, wire fencing, lights and other facilities) in such a position seems to show a complete lack of sensitivity to the community.

Community members, Cooranbong Business associations and Seventh-day Adventist church elders' have all overwhelmingly voiced their opposition to this site. 142 admissions were made to council – all opposed to a utility being built at 617. Many real concerns were expressed regarding the suitability of this land for such a facility.

617 was purchased in April, 2014. It was not originally part of the North Cooranbong estate. It has been proved that houses in a rural area near the Pitt Town Water utility have had their sale prices devalued. It is unfair that established residents should have their properties potentially devalued.

Another concern is the third party arrangements made with Avondale Greens. The Cooranbong Estate is predominately owned by the Australasian Conference Association (SDA Church) and Avondale Greens Pty Ltd (sole director Keith Johnson). The Johnson Property Group acts for these two landowners. This is a joint project between a developer and a church organisation that has tax exemptions. Sally McManus (The Australian Services Union state secretary) said an ICAC inquiry had demonstrated the outsourcing model for water services was flawed and open to exploitation.

Also of great concern are the possible problems with overflow. We have had huge amounts of rain and wind here last week. The power was out for several days and still is, in many cases. Hunter Water experienced a number of issues including water supply and sewer system outages. Hunter Water has not made an agreement with Cooranbong Water to provide a permanent connection point which will act as “an alternative discharge solution”. We cannot find any suitable solutions to this problem in the licence application. We often experience flooding in Cooranbong because it is in the Dora Creek flood plain. Also the ground is very clayey with little subsoil capable of absorbing large quantities of waste water.

JPG have made it clear on several occasions that the reason for choosing a private water company is to save them money. It is not up to the community to minimise the developers' expenses if it is to our detriment. If the developers have chosen not to connect entirely with Hunter Water, as originally planned, it is their responsibility to find a more suitable place for a private water company utility.