

Date: 14/5/24

Submission re: Cost of stormwater drainage in the Mamre Road Precinct

IPART

OceanWatch OceanWatch Australia Ltd is a national not-for-profit environmental company that works to advance sustainability in the Australian seafood industry.

OceanWatch's key activities involve:

- enhancing fish habitats and improving water quality in estuaries and coastal environments;
- working with industry and local communities to minimise environmental impacts;
- introducing industry and communities to sustainable technologies and behaviours.

In reviewing the issues paper OceanWatch wishes to make the following points.

1. The professional seafood industries capacity downstream to grow oysters or harvest seafood (Prawns, fish, squid and Eels) both inshore and offshore is greatly influenced by the health of the catchment. Nutrient inputs have historically been seen in the growth of aquatic plants fouling trawl nets, algal blooms limiting access to waterway users and disease outbreaks while sediment inputs have significantly changed flows and depths of the river smothering benthic habitats. Flows have also changed with dam manipulations, development and weather patterns.
2. Since European settlement, the Hawkesbury River basin has been developed and continues to be developed without a real consideration to those downstream. We have an opportunity to ensure development is designed and maintained to world's best practice, beyond current historical designs which Sydney deals with as a legacy of past priorities. The profit margin of developers needs to accommodate a higher level of design excellence for runoff which allows public authorities scope to operate that then take on maintenance of the infrastructure. Beyond the initial properties design, legacy issues are very expensive to repair or mitigate if done poorly and are unlikely to occur at the expense of downstream private ownership.
3. The current level of stormwater spending in **adjacent local government areas should not be used as a benchmark for future investments** as the status quo is still delivering substandard water quality, largely as a result of legacy underinvestment, care and design considerations. Evidence of this statement can be found in the current quality of riparian bankside vegetation, native biodiversity, marine debris and growth of introduced exotic aquatic weeds choking South creek.
4. This review **does indeed set a precedent** for other regions in what is considered acceptable and the norm. In our changing climate, regulators need to err on the side of caution and plan wider as we experience significant rainfall in short periods of time necessitating the need for higher capacity handling of potentially nutrient, sediment and pollutant rich waters. Historical investment in stormwater management shouldn't be used as a benchmark if the biological and physical boundaries the Community seek are being extended by climate change.

Feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] for further information.

Yours sincerely,

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