

11th October 2018

Objection by: Catherine Barnard

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Objection to the proposed stormwater drainage cost changes.

1. Reclassified as 'agricultural' despite my objections, mine is not an agricultural property, it is a natural bush protectorate.
2. My property is undeveloped bush with no landform modifications, fully draining into the aquifer and the natural creeks in the valley. I do not irrigate so do not add to the natural rain effects. I do not have dams as the Calga aquifer and creeks do their job of recycling the water naturally. Stormwater falling on my property has zero impact on any council storm water collection system. I should not be required to pay Council to manage stormwater when Council does not manage my stormwater, nature does.
3. I would anticipate that my property should be classed as a 'low impact' property. However, the draft suggests that 'low impact' assessment will only consider dams favouring farms. As described above, I have no need for dams to contain and manage run off, with the natural water drainage system dealing with stormwater. In fact, dams would alter the otherwise in-balance environment, and dams can fill and overflow causing stormwater problems rather than solving them. Even in the 2015 extreme weather event that was classed as a natural disaster, despite a massive local impact from the deluge, all of our property's run-off was absorbed into groundwater or flowed into the creeks. There was zero impact on Council's stormwater system. The unaltered natural drainage system is proven to be extreme-weather proof. Yet, despite this, I am concerned that, although my property should be eligible for 'low impact' status, the low impact criteria will be written in such a way as to exclude it.
4. I bought in Calga not Wyong, and paid Calga prices to purchase the property. The price of the property was based on the cost of maintaining a property in Calga, not Wyong. I already lost the property's special Rates exemption after the amalgamation (it had been given a special exemption which was to continue for as long as the property operates as a wildlife sanctuary) which took the Rates from zero to \$5,000. Now you want to impose a stormwater levy of \$5,427.81 too, which would take my increase in costs to over \$10,000.
5. These cost increases have the potential to break my tenant, Walkabout Park, financially, causing the Central Coast to lose the public services that Walkabout Park provides including wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, school education and community education, school and university programs, internships and TAFE traineeships, Aboriginal cultural education and contribution to the international tourist economy.