



Subject : Objection to Solo Water sewerage treatment licence amendment

The Catherine Hill Bay region is an environmentally and historically sensitive area of coastal land that is unique to the NSW central coast region. Significant efforts by the local community, local council and state governments over many years to preserve the area have been undertaken. To date, these efforts have protected the region from destruction and damage.

Recently, the housing development at Beaches has added additional pressure on the local environment as the increased population adds to traffic and parking congestion as well as increased demand on existing facilities and use of the beach at Catherine Hill Bay.

The recent application by Solo Water to vary the approved arrangements for the sewage treatment at Beaches estate should be dismissed and the company should be obligated to function within the existing guidelines.

Specifically, allowing the discharge of treated effluent into an area outside the Beaches estate has the potential to damage the sensitive ecosystem surrounding the creek and lagoon that surrounds Catherine Hill Bay beach. Discharge from the Solo Water facility has the potential to flow via the creek and lagoon directly onto the beach at Catherine Hill Bay. Given that there is this potential, the relevant Authority should err on the side of utmost caution when determining any application to amend the existing approval. The current licence provides for no allowance for liquid discharge from the current site. Surely, there was good and considered reason for this requirement and to vary this without a full environmental impact statement would be reckless in the extreme, both in terms of the local environment and the health of the local population.

The proposed REF amendment from Solo Water is a significant departure from the original operating licence. An alteration of this magnitude should trigger an environmental impact assessment, not an amendment to an existing REF. The local ecosystem is fragile and the impact of the proposed amendment should be examined in detail to prevent environment damage and health concerns.

Any attempt to downgrade the level of sewage processing (and the manner in which the byproduct is dealt with) must be resisted to protect the local environment. Any such requested change must be subjected to the most stringent testing and analysis and be the subject of a full new application (not merely an application to amend an existing licence).

Regards,

Michael Carmody