

COFFS HARBOUR ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC

PO BOX 2016
COFFS HARBOUR NSW 2450
(066) 523 940

8th June 1993

Dear Friends

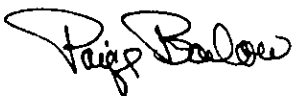
The battle to save Look at Me Now Headland at Emerald Beach from Coffs Harbour City Council's tenacious push to put an ocean outfall there, is once again heating up.

As I'm sure you are aware, when Council tried to force this development on the people of the Northern Beaches in October-November 1991, nearly 300 people were arrested, many on the criminal charge of "watch and beset", never before used in the case of peaceful protests in Australia. The criminal charges have been dropped, but the people of Emerald Beach are as determined as ever that the outfall will not go ahead.

Council is preparing a Development Application, and has now displayed an EIS for public comment. We hope you'll help us by encouraging your members and friends to write submissions to Coffs Harbour City Council supporting our cause.

This issue is vitally important, both environmentally and in terms of human rights. Our actions determine the fate of the environment which surrounds us and which nourishes us. We must protect our right to have a say in its preservation.

Thanks for your help.



Paige Barlow
Secretary

URGENT ATTENTION!!

**PROPOSED OUTFALL
LOOK-AT-ME-NOW HEADLAND
EMERALD BEACH
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

///

SUBMISSIONS NEEDED URGENTLY! They don't have to be long. A page will do. **Please put your submission in your own words** and send to:

The Town Clerk
Coffs Harbour City Council
PO Box 155
COFFS HARBOUR 2450

The EIS is on display at the Council, or can be purchased for \$25.00. It is 1500 pages long, and in five volumes, but is well worth the effort if you have the time and/or the money. Submissions have to be in by 22nd July. Here are some points which you might want to cover (you don't have to cover them all, or might have some of your own to add)

Social Response

The executive summary states: "In the short-term, there will be adverse social reaction in some sections of the community that could lead to social disruption. It is anticipated that this adverse response will reduce with time."

- ➡ Those who were involved in the original siege **WILL NEVER FORGET** the treatment they received at the hands of the Police/CHCC. There is no mention of the police action in October-November 1991, nor its effect on the community:-
 - Stress of criminal proceedings
 - Financial burden of legal defences
 - Physical harm to some
 - Disruption of normal family life
 - Disrespect of young and old for police
- ➡ Future police action not mentioned or costed. What is the price in social and monetary terms of police presence at Emerald Beach for the 45+ weeks it will take to construct the outfall? Who will protect the rest of Coffs while the Police, the PWD and Council are forcing this unwanted development on the people of Emerald Beach?
- ➡ The impact on future Japanese resort of continued discharge to Willis Creek has been given greater consideration than the impact on the citizens of Emerald Beach of the outfall.

- ➡ Main psychological reference is Peter Sandman, whose work has been misinterpreted and misrepresented. Sandman, in fact, says, and the EIS misses:-
 - * Social perceptions are as important and as scientific as technical data and **must be given equal consideration**
 - * Developments which are coerced and beyond the control of the people who are affected by them can be expected to cause **high public outrage**. This outrage will be compounded if the development is seen as victimising a particular segment of the population, if the sources of information are untrustworthy and unaccountable, and if there is a risk to future generations.
 - * Copies of Sandman's work available. Ring Paige (066) 528 788.

Accountability

The Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") will allow effluent discharge into Solitary Island Marine Reserve "only if stringent effluent standards including nutrient removal were consistently met"

- ➡ System failures occur during which raw effluent will be pumped into the ocean with no public knowledge. They say this will be monitored. In past raw sewage has been discharged into Coffs Creek without public knowledge. The public has a right to know, and has no reason to trust the PWD in this regard.
- ➡ Closed system more easily monitored by public.
- ➡ Closed system such as Willis Creek or wetlands more easily contained in case of failure or errors.
- ➡ Effluent is not required to be treated to as high a standard as that discharged to sensitive waters such as Willis Creek, so a health risk is posed. An estimated ~~600 million~~ ⁴ coliforms will be pumped through the outfall daily by the year 2001. Microfiltration at the Sewerage Treatment Plant ("STP") would reduce this to nil. ~~4~~ ⁶ billion

Incompatibility with existing reserves

- ➡ Private Member's Bill still before Parliament which will include LAMN as part of Moonee Beach Nature Reserve
- ➡ Solitary Island Marine Reserve earmarked by National Parks & Wildlife Service for future park status
Both require clean water and preservation of headland to maintain scientific value.

NOTE:

- ➡ 62 species of plants including endangered species *Zierra prostrata* and *Thesium australe*. **Recently discovered: *Chamaesyce sparmmanii* - in danger of extinction; *Lepturus repens* - the only known colony of this coastal grass in New South Wales.**
- ➡ 108 species of birds

- ➡ Fauna Impact Statement currently being done, but not available for public display and comment. Submissions to the consultants have noted in the marine environment:
 - * abalone colony
 - * lobster breeding ground
 - * sea turtles, whales, dolphins
 - * large population of molluscs - these filter feeders accumulate toxins
- ➡ Solitary Island Marine Reserve the southern most outcrop of coral - 52 hermetic reef building species in area. Effluent known to have detrimental effect on these.

Zoning

- ➡ Land and Environment Court found proposed development inconsistent with recreational zoning
- ➡ CHEC considers re-zoning of headland to permit public works to be illegal

Blasting

The risks of blasting on the headland are "unknown" but may include "losing the upper face of the headland". There is also the risk of destabilising the entire headland, destroying the caves and enabling erosion to take place at the water line. This issue has not been addressed by the EPA, nor the EIS.

Consultation

The consultants called for public comment and organised a working party with members of the community. However, **these views have been discounted or ignored.**

- ➡ The consensus of the working party was 7:2 in favour of some alternate method of disposal
- ➡ Written and oral submissions to the consultants were 42 anti outfall and 15 pro outfall
- ➡ Historically, opposition to an outfall on the northern beaches has been consistent and persistent for 10 years.

Council and the PWD see two kinds of consultation:-

1. Something they do to fulfil statutory requirements;
2. Something they do to the public after they make decisions to justify their position.

Peter Sandman, Council's psychological expert, states that the only effective form of community consultation is a process which involves shared decision making and responsibility. However Council has chosen consistently to ignore this aspect of his work.

Other Options

are preferred by both the community and other government organisations:-

- * The EPA favours a pipeline to Coffs Harbour STP.
- * The NPWS favours **total re-use**
- * The Working Party to the EIS favours wetlands

The technology is there.

- ➡ Total re-use is both possible and necessary in a city whose water supply is critical. If effluent is good enough for goldfish to swim around in, it's good enough to re-use.
- ➡ Memtec would meet the EPA requirements for Willis Creek.
- ➡ Village schemes enable acceptance of responsibility for own problems.

Tourism

What tourists perceive about outfalls determines their choices. There is a clear connection between Sydney's outfalls and all other outfalls. Tourists get out of Sydney to come to clean beaches. This controversy has already had a detrimental effect on tourism.

Independence of EIS

Is questionable.

- ➡ How much work does Camp Scott Furphy do for the PWD? Does this alter the content and bias of the material presented in the EIS?
- ➡ Can costings which have not been submitted for tender be considered to be credible?

Good luck! Ring if you need help or have any questions.

