

IN SUPPORT OF THE PLANNED SEWERAGE SYSTEM FOR LOCH, NYORA AND POOWONG

THE ESSENTIAL SERVICES COMMISSION CHAIR PERSON

AS ADDRESSED :

This submission is written in support of the currently proposed sewerage scheme for the townships of Loch, Nyora and Poowong.

As landholders and residents of the Nyora township, we believe that the following points should be considered in the review of the ESC decision to remove funding for the sewer scheme .

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The vast majority of those residing in this area(84% at a survey conducted by the Shire of Gippsland in 2007) were in favour of the scheme.

That position was recently re-iterated by way of a petition in march this year, that collected 387 signatures in the three towns in the very short period of just 2 weeks!

Further, at a Public meeting convened at very short notice at the Nyora public hall on 22nd April that attracted about 70 people- there was unanimous support for the provision of the promised sewage system.

HEALTH AND DUTY OF CARE

It has been definitively established by the Shire of Gippsland Health officials, that the current system of septic tanks within these towns are incapable of handling their effluent loads; and that the soil types in these areas also precludes their effective operation.

This is exacerbated by periods of high rainfall levels which leads to:

- Unacceptable levels of faecal material appearing in the open drains
- This same material contaminating local productive farmlands and dams
- And finally flowing into the head waters of both the Lang Lang and Bass rivers

THE PRESUMED COMMUNITY OPPOSITION TO THE SCHEME

The apparent opposition to this scheme has been orchestrated by a group known as the “Yannathan Rd. Development Group”; who, as I understand, are led by three absentee landholders who are said to be *“very well connected.”*

I understand that this group have claimed that the “community” is opposed to this scheme; and that they have collected a large number of signatures on a petition to support their position.

It was quite interesting that not one representative of that group attended the meeting at Nyora on the 22nd of April, to represent their views.

Also, in speaking to the many locals that I have had contact with, including people who live in the Yannathan Rd. Area, no one is aware of any person who supports the Yannathan Rd. Group, or indeed, was party to their submission or petition.

I would therefore respectfully ask you to check on the authenticity and accuracy of the claims made by the Yannathan Rd. Group and the validity of the contents of their petition, prior to any final decision.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we believe that the communities of Loch, Nyora and Poowong deserve to have the promise and long awaited sewage system as planned by Sth. Gippsland Water; which is in fact the culmination of years of planning and expectation within these communities.

It would seem that if this project does not go ahead as planned; that this displays a scant disregard for the health and welfare of the people living in this area.

Evidence of this can be seen through the example of a serious health issue that has been directly attributed to the this lack of an effective sewerage system; and was outlined at the Nyora meeting.

Equally, we believe that it is grossly unfair, and in fact anti democratic for a small group, no matter how well connected, to be able to exert a disproportionate influence over decision makers; and thereby prevent this essential piece of community infrastructure from being provided.

Ivan Smith Gwenda Smith David Smart Belinda Smart

26/04/2013

Cc: Russell Broadbent

Cc: south Gippsland shire council