

Catherine Hill Bay Progress Association

(Established 1901)

NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2018

Next meeting time: 5.00 pm Saturday 19th May 2018

Location: 17 Flowers Drive, Catherine Hill Bay

Only a few weeks left to save the beach at Catherine Hill Bay!



Solo Water, who operate the sewerage treatment plant for the Beaches estate, has applied to IPART for an amendment to its licence that would allow them to discharge treated effluent to an area outside the boundaries of the Beaches estate. This is a significant variation that must not be allowed on public health and environmental grounds and should be strongly opposed by the local community.

The existing licence has no allowance for liquid discharge from the site, and solid or sludge discharge as a by-product of the process is to be carted from the site for remediation. They are now asking for a liquid discharge into the environment. The application proposes that up to 160,000 litres per day of treated effluent could be discharged to the north of the Beaches estate and would flow to the creek, and from there into the lagoon, and onto the beach at Catherine Hill Bay.

You already know that the creek only breaks through to the sea after heavy rain, rarely more than once a year. Most of the time the water pools up to form a “lagoon”

which spreads across the beach. LMCC often has to intervene and dig a channel to the sea but after a few days the tide brings the sand in again and the entry closes. The lagoon generally has still water conditions which may become septic with the addition of treated effluent.

Currently the treated effluent is sprayed over areas 6 & 7 of the Beaches development. Now that they want to sell the land for housing they are faced with a problem (of their own making). The cheapest and easiest solution is to dump this treated effluent into the Catherine Hill Bay creek/lagoon. Young children swim in this lagoon, particularly when the surf is rough and too dangerous.

It is assumed that Solo Water have not proposed to send their excess effluent into the Moonee Beach creek catchment as National Parks & Wildlife Services is unlikely to grant permission. All the excess treated effluent that Solo Water wishes to discharge from the Beaches estate will end up on the beach at Catherine Hill Bay. There are other options but this is the cheapest and easiest for Solo Water. Solo Water could, for example, truck their treated excess effluent to Swansea/Belmont where it can be discharged into the deep-sea outlets. They could also build a pipeline that discharges their excess effluent into an existing wastewater system connected to an ocean outfall discharge system.

They are essentially requesting an amendment to their licence to potentially pollute the local environment on an ongoing basis at their discretion.

This Solo Water *Review of Environmental Factors* (REF) amendment is a significant departure from the original operating licence procedures both in respect of the treatment process, and that the treated effluent would now be discharged outside of the Beaches subdivision boundaries. We believe that operating licence changes of this magnitude should trigger a full environmental impact assessment, not an amendment to an existing REF. They need to prove that their pollution releases will not adversely affect the downstream environment using proper scientific methods.

There are many unknowns in regards to the potential impacts that this amended proposal could bring to our ecosystems. These could include the gradual accumulation of pharmaceuticals, plastics, hormones, minerals and heavy metals within the creek systems.

We strongly encourage you to make a submission opposing this licence amendment as follows:

- Go to the IPART website (<https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home>)
- Select "Water" from the list across the top of the screen, then
- Select "Licence applications & variations" within the "Licensing" pane
- Catherine Hill Bay is first on the list.

It is very easy to put in a submission. When you click onto the link under the "Scheme" column for the Catherine Hill Bay entry, there is a box "Have your say", click here and begin. **Submissions must be in by 9th May 2018.**

The Association will be putting in a submission and we will circulate this to you as soon as possible.

Landcare

- The Landcare Team have changed to the first Monday of the month at 3-5pm from March onwards and have kept on weeding the south of the Graveyard Beach track to beach, southside. Notice the difference!
- Our Green Team days this year are Mon 4th June & Mon 22nd October. They are volunteers in Lake Mac Landcare, here 9-noon, and love locals joining in.
- Daniel their leader will also stop by on other days to cut and paint the incorrigible blackberry too.

Social media and website

Representatives from the PA recently met with the organisers of the Facebook page for residents of the new Beaches estate. It was a positive meeting with a general discussion on CHB issues, especially the LMCC Belmont Plan (on recreational facilities planned for CHB) and there was agreement on both sides to form an overarching Catherine Hill Bay Community Group with representation from both the PA and Beaches residents (and future residents of the Wallalong development). All are welcome to become Friends of the CHB PA and attend meetings.

Membership renewals now due on 1st July

To comply with our new constitution and to simplify PA accounting practices, membership fees will now become due on the 1st July each year. For those members that have renewed their membership fees since 1 January 2018, you will receive a 50% credit towards your fees for the 2018/19 financial year. We will issue a reminder email when fees next become due in July.

Traffic safety

A reminder that if you observe any dangerous driving in Catho, such as speeding or burn-outs, please report it immediately to the Police Assistance Line on Ph 131444. Police databases log and maintain records of all calls, and the more people that report dangerous driving incidents, the more Police resources that will be allocated to keeping our streets in Catherine Hill Bay safe.

The last coal loading sea jetty in Australia still stands!

The jetty at Catherine Hill Bay has played a significant role in the maritime history of NSW. Boats carrying coal from our jetty to Balls Head in Sydney Harbour were a regular daily sight. Mr Thornton, the second last Jetty Master at Catho remarked, *"Sunday night we loaded a ship called the Abersea and before I was due to go home the next afternoon it was back again for another load"*. So frequent were these runs that the colliers were the only ships allowed into Sydney Harbour without a pilot.



In some ways not a lot has changed, as the jetty was also used by locals for fishing, even when it was part of an operating mine site. Mr Thornton said, *"It didn't matter what you did they got onto the jetty. The Bay people were fishermen and that's all there was to it."*

A great excursion in Sydney is to go to the Coal Loader at Balls Head (Waverton, see picture). North Sydney Council has recently opened the Coal Loader Restoration Project, and it is stunning. It's a wonderful example of an adaptive reuse of an historic working site, which includes a café, SES base, artist retreat, sustainability centre, community gardens and even chooks - its all there. And of course you will see the "other" jetty, where coal from Catho was delivered to Sydney for distribution to other ships. The Catherine Hill Bay jetty is an important bookend to this maritime history.



For more details and PA meeting minutes, check out our website
<http://catherinehillbay.org.au/>
and the various Facebook pages for the latest news and great photos.

<https://www.facebook.com/CatherineHillBayTennisCourt?ref=hl>

<https://www.facebook.com/CathHillBay>

<https://www.facebook.com/CathHillBayLandcare?ref=hl>

<https://www.facebook.com/cathoboardriders?fref=ts>

<https://www.facebook.com/cathobowlo?fref=ts>