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CENTRAL COAST DESALINATION PROJECT GETS GO-AHEAD

The NSW Government today approved Wyong Shire Council's proposed \$75 million desalination plant at Toukley, after imposing some important conditions to protect marine life.

Department of Planning Director-General Sam Haddad said the 20 megalitre per day desalination plant would be located on the site of the Toukley sewage treatment plant.

Wyong Shire Council has sought approval for the plant.

The plant is proposed to collect seawater from a collector well system beneath Lakes Beach, before desalinating the water at the treatment plant site and returning saline water combined with treated water from the sewage treatment plant to the ocean.

Mr Haddad said the Government had either prohibited or restricted the return of some by-products of the desalination process to the ocean, to ensure that marine life near the outfall is not impacted.

The Department has also required that the seawater intakes are buried deep under Lakes Beach to avoid dune erosion and unnecessary impacts on this important coastal location.

The aquatic ecology around the Norah Head ocean outfall is already impacted by 'fresh water' discharges from the Toukley sewage treatment plant.

The proposed saline water discharges from the desalination plant will reduce these impacts by producing a discharge stream similar to ocean water.

Furthermore, noise limits and construction hours have been imposed to protect local amenity. These are among a total of 61 conditions placed on the approval.

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