



THE ENTRANCE COMMUNITY
PRECINCT COMMITTEE

**Mayor of Wyong Shire Council, Bob Graham's presentation on 16 June,
2009 on
Mardi to Mangrove Pipeline**

Bob began his presentation by reminding that this project had a long history and had been proposed for many many, years. Mangrove Dam is a storage dam, not a catchment dam, and when it was constructed it was intended to pump water into it from St Albans Weir, however, for various reasons this never eventuated.

The recent drought saw our dam levels fall to 12%; that's 88% empty. When the two local dams that supply both Gosford and Wyong are both full, all additional rainfall is wasted and flows out to sea. Water from the Hunter and the Wyong River are useless to us in the present situation when both Mardi and Mooney dams are full.

Obtaining funding for a pipeline to link Mardi Dam with the Mangrove storage dam was needed to secure the water supply. The Mayor said in the run up to the 2007 Federal elections he approached the then member for Dobell, Ken Tickhurst about the federal Government funding the project. Armed with a figure worked out on the back of an envelope he asked for \$80 million. The then Prime Minister, John Howard, came to the Central Coast and duly announced that if re-elected his government would fund the pipeline to an amount of \$80 million. Bob Graham then approached the Labour candidate for Dobell, Craig Thompson about the pipeline and in due course the Labour party announced that they would fund the pipeline to an amount of \$80.3 million, topping John Howard offer. That is were the \$80.3 million in Federal government funding came from. Subsequent discussions revealed that if he had asked for \$120 million he would not have got it and the project would have not gone forward!

Bob advised us that in hind sight Councils public relations could have been better, especially with the residents of the Yarramalong Valley, who are not on town water, get no benefit from the project yet are the most impacted. This has led to a restructure of the Project Team charged with management of the project. A New Project Technical Director, Mr Rod Jewel has been appointed in a restructuring of the Project Team

Bob pointed out that this is a Joint Water Authority, however, Gosford City Council has been of little help in the past in this regard, leaving the hard yards to Wyong Council, especially by refusing desalination plants and leaving the design, acquisition and construct of the Newcastle pipeline to Wyong Council. When it comes to the fight against coal mines in the Yarramalong Valley, Gosford Council has done little to fight the mining approval, leaving it again to Wyong Council. The Joint Water Authority is at present difficult to manage. A recommendation from the Joint Water Committee has to be agreed to and passed by two separate councils. The process it implement anything can take up to six months.

There was a possibility that our water assets were to be given to Sydney or Hunter water. Gosford Council agreed to this but Wyong Council held out. The danger was that the \$1.3 Billion in water infrastructure in Wyong Shire would be sold off by a cash strapped State Government. There are 300 employees in the Water Authority and they had no job security if the Authority was sold off. The future of the Joint Water Authority is looking more assured following Phillip Costa, Minister for Water, and Minister for Regional Development's assurances that a new Water Board would be set up under the control of both Councils.

The Mayor provided the Precinct Committee with the following facts about the pipeline:

Work is progressing with pre-construction work on the project:

- The project involves building two pipelines and two pump stations:
 - 2km underground pipeline from Wyong River to Mardi Dam
 - 19km underground pipeline from Mardi Dam to Mangrove Creek Dam - One new pump station at Wyong River
 - One new pump station at Mardi Dam
- A recent update was to make some route and design changes to the Project - which will reduce the overall cost of the project by \$15 million and also lessen the overall impact on Wyong River.
- It also reduces the impact on Wvong River as we now have four river crossings instead of eight (four were previously in Sector 6).
- Three river crossings will now be pipe-bridged and one will be underbored to avoid impacting a State Government-recognised Property Vegetation Plan.
- We will also have a platypus monitoring and management program all along the river where the pipeline will be built. This will involve a qualified platypus expert.
- We are also working with 54 landholders who's properties will be directly impacted by the pipeline.
- We have worked with landholders on the exact pipeline alignment and responded to a number of questions they have (eg location of valves on their land, restoration of land after construction, access to properties, etc).
- We are also talking to them about the easement process - we need to acquire easements on their land for the buried pipeline - and we are paying fair compensation for these in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.
- Other progress includes concept engineering designs for the project - now nearly complete (for the two pipelines and two pump stations).
 - Detailed engineering designs for the project now about 50% complete.
- We have carried out on-site surveys, engineering investigations, environmental investigations, and a range of other work which is necessary before we start construction.
- We are also assessing the traffic management requirements which will be necessary during construction.
- We have ongoing liaison with about 10 State Government agencies in relation to the regulation and approvals process.
- We are also preparing a Review of Environmental Factors document (REF) which will detail a range of environmental issues and mitigation works, as well as the need for other key management plans during construction.
- The REF will go on public exhibition for comment - anticipated to be in July.
- Tenders are anticipated to be called later this year. Construction should begin early next year. Project completion should be by mid-2011.
- The Mardi-Mangrove Link is an initiative of Wyong Shire and Gosford City Councils. It has Australian Government funding of \$80.3 million through the Water Smart Australia Program.
 - It will benefit the whole Central Coast community which currently includes around 330,000 water users.
- It is part of Water Plan 2050 which is our long-term water supply strategy for the Central Coast. It aims to help secure our water supply for the next four decades.
- The Mardi-Mangrove Link is the largest water infrastructure project on the Central Coast since Mangrove Creek Dam was commissioned in 1982. We therefore have to go through a very detailed process to ensure we comply with all the necessary legislation, construction, community, environment and other requirements.

- We still have a long way to go but we are working through each step carefully and thoroughly. We need to ensure the most effective and appropriate outcomes for the community, the environment and overall construction needs.
- Note - the overall cost of the project will not be known until the construction contract is let and the project is close to completion.
- A preliminary cost estimate process has been done and this has indicated a cost estimate range of \$125 million - \$170 million (as at May 2009).
- This range is not just for construction but for all project elements - i.e. project design, engineering studies, environmental studies, community liaison, easement acquisition, project management, construction and commissioning.
- The estimate is different to the previous cost indication of \$110 million in early 2008 as this was based on historical industry data, limited site inspections, and trenched river crossings.
- Back then we did not have a recommended pipeline route, an agreed number of river crossings or concept designs for the project.
- Now we have much more detailed information, an agreed pipeline route, on-site investigations, concept designs, etc.
- So we are moving forward every day - and we all look forward to its completion.

The following questions were up to the Mayor:

- Q. The Shire ratepayers were paying water rate before water was available.
A. Yes people bought the infrastructure we have today.
- Q. Is it possible to use the Mangrove Wyong River tunnel?
A. No it is not suitable for pumping.
- Q. Is it possible to use the Mangrove Wyong River tunnel?
A. No it is not suitable for pumping.
- Q. What is the diameter of the pipe?
A. Not finally determined, but about 1 meter.
- Q. If Mangrove Dam is a storage dam why was no provision made for pumping water to it at the time of construction?
A. The original proposal for a weir at St Albans to supply water to Mangrove did not eventuate because the planned supply was found to be inadequate. The problem is a small catchment and a huge dam, that could even have its wall raised to double its capacity. The new pipeline will go both ways allowing us to supply water in the future to the Hunter if needed.
- Q. Gosford Council has organized PR tours of the dams. Does Wyong?
A. Wyong does have tours.
- Q. Do you think that the Coal Mining will go ahead?
A. Though I am doing everything I can to stop it I believe it will go ahead.
- Q. If coal pollutes the catchment will we need the Tillegra Dam?
A. Mine subsidence would take 40 to 50 years happen before it started to pollute the catchment.
- Q. What about buried chickens polluting the catchment?
A. The water supply is not being contaminated from this.

Rod Slater moved that we commend Bob for his efforts over the years. Carried unanimously by applause.

Sampson, Sue

From: Fawcett.Sian
Sent: Friday, 22 May 2009 2:52 PM
To: Sampson, Sue
Subject: RE: The Entrance Community Precinct committee 16th June 2009

Hi Sue

hopefully the following is of assistance to Bob

Cheers

Sian

In a nutshell...

many people want a breakwall because they think that the lake is 'it isn't. They think that the foreshores are in a mess because the lake water is dirty and therefore we should flush it out through the entrance. The Lakes are lagoons and will never have blue water in them. They flush by water moving down from the catchment not in through The Entrance

The issues around the edges of the lakes, i.e. the black ooze are not an issue because of poor water quality; they are an issue because the edges of the lakes have been modified (hard edge - not a gentle slope) and cause the wrack to build up against the edge of the foreshores which in turn smother the underlying sediments which makes them (the sediments) turn black (oozy) and let off rotten egg gas..

If we had more water moving in and out through a permanent entrance or even a second entrance, we would not improve the ooze around the lake foreshores. The solution to get rid of the oozy foreshores is to re-establish a natural grade on the foreshore (1% - a very gentle slope) and replant the slope with salt marsh. This would allow the wrack to get out of the water and wash up on the salt marsh, dry out and break down. This means that no more wrack would sit in the water.

Apart from the obvious that the break wall isn't the solution to addressing the foreshore ooze issue, there would be a whole lot of Issues associated with construction of a break wall:

- increased tidal movements - twice/day there will be large mud flats exposed for long periods of time (like after the June long weekend storm)
- we would lose the houses around Curtis Pde Nth Entrance because the North Entrance Beach would readjust (this happened to the small village of Sheilong Palms when the Brunswick River had break walls constructed)
- we would lose the recreational value of The Entrance channel
- more sharks would enter the lakes
- mangroves would move into the foreshores blocking views and invading our saltmarsh
- we would be more vulnerable to the damaging impacts of sea level rise
- we would have a very dangerous bar to navigate through at the entrance to the channel!
- the lake would change to a marine system
- we would still need to dredge the channel - probably more than we already do
- etc etc

Sian Fawcett
 Manager
 Estuary Management
Wyong Shire Council
 P. O. Box 20, WYONG NSW 2259
 Tel: 02 4350 5506 Fax: 02 4351 2098
 E-mail: Sian.Fawcett@wyong.nsw.gov.au

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