

## SCOTLAND ISLAND WASTEWATER / SEWERAGE UPDATE

For those who have just become aware of this issue some background information is here:

<http://www.scotlandisland.org.au/sira/scotland-island-sewerage/>

### SURVEY RESULTS

The survey was held as part of an ongoing Scotland Island community consultation and engagement process on this issue. While the issue has been on the community agenda for decades it became more focused in the past six months with the review of the Sydney Water Licence by IPART. The matter was a major item at the SIRA AGM in February 2015 where we had a guest speaker on the matter talking about Dangar Island's experience of the installation of a sewerage system.

The background information for this survey was provided in part in the survey itself, on the website and at the General Meeting held during the survey period. The question asked was:

*"Do you support a sewerage system for Scotland Island, on the condition that the only cost is to connect your household plumbing system to the Sydney Water System?"*

**Total number of Responses: 383**

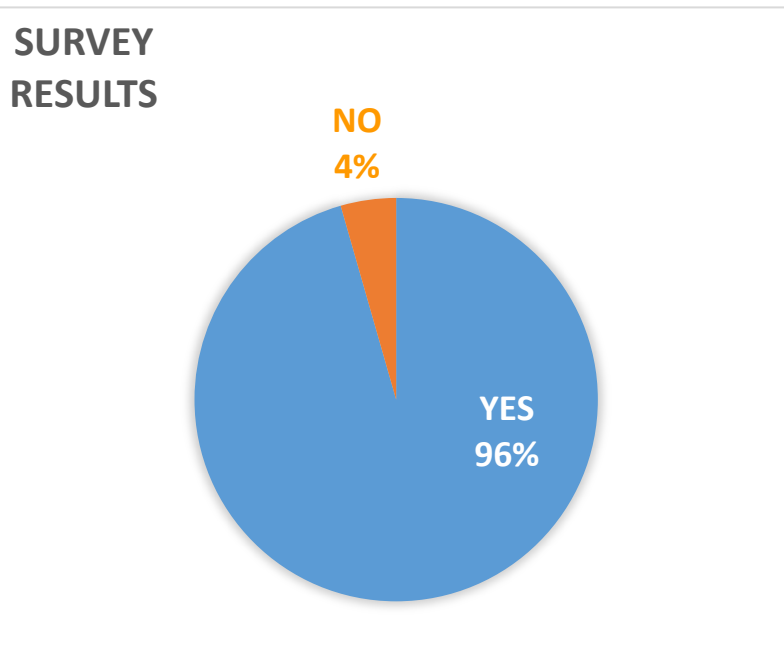
**No: 17**

**Yes: 366**

### COMMENTS

There were 100 comments made by people who completed the survey.

Please see separate "Comments Made" document on the website.



## IPART Report – May, 2015

[http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/website/trimholdingbay/report to the minister - sydney water corporation operating licence - may 2015.pdf](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/files/sharedassets/website/trimholdingbay/report%20to%20the%20minister%20-%20sydney%20water%20corporation%20operating%20licence%20-%20may%202015.pdf)

In summary this Report recommended that the Priority Sewerage Program (PSP) still be included in the new Sydney Water Operating Licence, but that there is no requirement for Sydney Water to have a timeframe to sewer Scotland Island as Sydney Water have successfully argued that it is too expensive to do so and will only do so if the NSW Government directs them to (see below).

Some relevant extracts from the Report:

*In regard to submissions received the PSP and clarity around who was responsible for implementation and timeframe for implementation. In particular, **the majority of submissions regarding this issue supported the construction of a sewerage service by Sydney Water at Scotland Island.***

*We propose that existing Priority Sewerage Program obligations are drafted to require Sydney Water to cooperate, implement and participate in any Government review of the PSP and if required, to implement and comply with the outcomes of any review.*

*Three PSP schemes, Yanderra, Nattai and Scotland Island are **not yet scheduled for completion by Sydney Water.** This is primarily as they **would be very expensive and therefore would incur significant costs to Sydney Water's customers.** As outlined in the CBA and according to Sydney Water, these schemes would add nearly \$5 per annum to the bill of each of Sydney Water's 1.7 million wastewater customers for a period of 78 years.*

*There are alternative mechanisms available to the Government to ensure the remaining areas of the PSP are serviced - if this is its intent. These alternative mechanisms include: a direction to Sydney Water under the State Owned Corporations Act 1989 (NSW); or the Government seeking bids from the market to service specific PSP areas via competitive tender, with Sydney Water as a potential public sector comparator.*

### Sydney Water Recent Press Release

To add insult to injury, in a major Press Release Sydney Water announced that they have sufficient funds so that:

*"Sydney Water is proposing to lower prices for customers over the next four years from 1 July 2016. This means most households will save over \$100 on their water & wastewater bill each year.... We're able to reduce customer bills for 2016–20, because we've made significant efficiency gains in the current regulatory period. We've become more efficient, without compromising the quality of service we offer our customers.... We'll also be passing on to our customers very large cost reductions from external factors, notably lower interest rates."*

Sydney Water argues that completing all their remaining PSP projects (including Scotland Island) would add \$5 per year to every customer's bill. This could be achieved 20 times over with the rebate they are now proposing.

### Sydney Water Operating Licence

[http://www.sydneywater.com.au/web/groups/publicwebcontent/documents/document/zgrf/mdq1/~edisp/dd\\_045161.pdf](http://www.sydneywater.com.au/web/groups/publicwebcontent/documents/document/zgrf/mdq1/~edisp/dd_045161.pdf)

On October 20, the new 5 year Operating Licence was released. A key extract from this document is as follows:

#### 4.4 Priority Sewerage Program

4.4.1 Sydney Water must co-operate with, and participate in, any Government review of the Priority Sewerage Program.

4.4.2 If required by the Minister, Sydney Water must implement and comply with any outcomes (including timeframes) of a Government review of the Priority Sewerage Program.

[Note: The areas to which the Priority Sewerage Program applies are Austral, Menangle, Menangle Park, Nattai, Scotland Island and Yanderra as listed in Schedule 3 of this Licence.]

## Ongoing Activity

On Monday August 24, members of the SIRA Water and Wastewater Working Group met with Rob Stokes where we discussed Wastewater, Water and other matters. Rob confirmed the NSW Government's commitment for connecting the sewerage to Scotland Island as per the December 2012, NSW Government Northern Beaches Regional Action Plan. This is a view he has communicated with the Minister for Lands and Water, the Hon. Niall Blair.

Rob has brokered the establishment of a **Scotland Island Sewerage Working Group** with representatives from Sydney Water, Pittwater Council and residents of Scotland Island to progress this issue. The first meeting of this group is planned for some time before the end of the year.

Rob's office is preparing some broad Terms of Reference for this group that will include some timelines. **The sticking point will be the degree of financial contribution that Sydney Water will be seeking from residents.** You will recall that our only mandate, as per the survey, is that the only cost to residents is to connect household plumbing systems to the Sydney Water system.

The other matter for discussion with this Working Group will be aspects of the engineering and technical systems as well as design issues which will affect costs. **In this regard we are seeking the pro-bono support from within our community, if possible, of a suitably qualified engineer or person with relevant experience to join this group.**

## CALL TO ACTION

1. We seek the pro-bono support of a suitably qualified engineer, or person with relevant experience, to join the *Wastewater Working Group* (with representatives from Sydney Water, Pittwater Council and Scotland Island) to provide technical engineering advice and advocate on behalf of the community.
2. If we are unable to find someone from within our community, we may seek community support to raise sufficient funds to engage a suitable person/company for this role.
3. To keep this issue alive, an ongoing campaign is being prepared and we call upon your support. We need people with skills, passion and ideas to keep moving this along. In the interim, please ensure that your views are heard by communicating with significant decision makers.

### **Key Points to consider:**

- Scotland Island is the only metro Sydney suburb with no mains services (357 houses)
- The Island is 200 meters from the mains sewage line at Church Point
- There is clear evidence of health hazards and environmental degradation
- We have a clear commitment from the State Government to do the work
- Sydney Water clearly has the financial capacity to implement the system, with its proposal to give \$100 rebates to its all existing customers
- We have been waiting 30 years for planning and implementation!
- Work must be completed within the next 5 years

### **Please address your communications to:**

The Hon. Niall Blair, Minister for Lands and Water, GPO Box 5341, Sydney 2001  
email: [office@blair.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@blair.minister.nsw.gov.au)

The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, 1725 Pittwater Road, Mona Vale 2103  
email: [pittwater@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:pittwater@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

**Please send a copy to: [president@sira.org.au](mailto:president@sira.org.au)**