

December 14, 2014

The Hon. Kevin Humphries, MP
Minister for Natural Resources, Lands and Water
GPO Box 5341
Sydney 2001



Dear Mr. Humphries,

Re: Scotland Island Wastewater Priority Sewerage Program (PSP) and Sydney Water Operating Licence

In August, we wrote a submission to IPART (attached) requesting that the above program for the delivery of a wastewater service to Scotland Island be included in Sydney Water's new Operating Licence.

Sydney Water, the Authority responsible for the provision of mains water and sewerage infrastructure across the Sydney Metro area, has previously acknowledged the need for the provision of a sewerage service for the Scotland Island community and, since 2000 has been on their Priority Sewerage Program (PSP). At that time the timeframe for completion was within 10 years. Fifteen years later we still have no result and Sydney Water is now seeking an exemption through IPART to renege on its previously accepted obligation. Since the 1990s most of the developed areas in Pittwater, including Bayview and Church Point have been provided with and sewerage services. This development had an immediate and dramatic positive impact on the water quality of the Pittwater waterway and provided radically improved amenity, safety, health and environmental outcomes

The only remaining unsewered areas in Pittwater are Scotland Island and the Western Foreshores, where septic tanks and /or on-site disposal still result in effluent tracking down road gutters, entering stormwater systems and plumbing into the waterway. The on-site disposal in steep terrain exacerbates the threat of landslip and there are potentially *adverse health implications*.

In 1996-97 SIRA commissioned an environmental study. Results indicated that storm water run-off on the Island and in surrounding waterways is contaminated with both nutrients and bacteria. Bacterial levels are extremely high, significantly exceeding ANZECC guidelines for surface water and salt water estuaries.

While we acknowledge that the dispersed nature of the Western Foreshores presents problems in the provision of infrastructure services, this cannot be said of Scotland Island with its higher concentration of properties (over 800 residents). We believe that, as a matter of social justice, we should be treated as no different to the rest of Sydney.

SIRA therefore calls on the Minister to advocate for the urgent provision of sewerage infrastructure for Scotland Island to bring it into line with the mainland, remove a potential pollution source and further improve the water quality of Pittwater and its environs.

It obviously makes sense that in providing sewerage infrastructure that a mains water supply be provided at the same time in line with the rest of Sydney. In this regard, Scotland Island residents would continue to harvest rainwater to good effect but have a far more reliable potable water supply.

Your support will make a positive difference to a vibrant and resourceful Island community and the continued ecological health of beautiful Pittwater.

Yours truly

Bill Eye
President
SIRA

Judy Readman
Vice President
SIRA

Cc: Barry Buffier, CEO, EPA; Rob Stokes, MP; Mark Ferguson, Christ Hunt, Pittwater Council; All Councillors