

# **ST GEORGES BASIN COMMUNITY FORUM**

Submission  
No 31

PO Box 37, St Georges Basin  
NSW 2540

The Committee Manager  
Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House-Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

29<sup>th</sup> April 2005

**Submission on Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas.**  
Relevant to St Georges Basin/Sanctuary Point area on the south coast of NSW.

To The Committee

St Georges Basin Community Forum is one of the recognised Principal Consultative Bodies (PCB) recognised by Shoalhaven City Council as an organization which :

- a) Has geographic boundaries covering an area with a common interest.
- b) Has the general support and confidence of the local community to :
  - i) disseminate information
  - ii) facilitate discussion
  - iii) communicate collective views of the community to Council
- c) Is representative of the residents and ratepayers within the PCB area.

The St Georges Basin Community Forum has been operating for many years, during which time residents have brought and relayed their problems at meetings, resulting in letters written on their (and the Forum's) behalf. Through placement on Estuary Management Task Forces, Traffic Committees and also as members of other local groups Forum committee members have gained knowledge of the lack of services and infrastructure as well as environmental problems. Added to this, day-to-day activities of residents usually highlights issues occurring around the area.

Community members attend Forum meetings held every month (excluding Dec & Jan) and in some instances speakers address the meeting on specific issues, such as traffic problems, housing development problems, stormwater control (or lack of) etc.

Through the Forum's commitment to residents and to the local environment some of the knowledge gained has been on issues relating to :

- 1) Transport
- 2) Roads
- 3) Medical
- 4) Development applications
- 5) Stormwater
- 6) Environmental impacts of developments

## St Georges Basin Community Forum's Comments on each issue.

### Transport

- 1) St Georges Basin/Sanctuary Point areas are two of the fastest growing in the state. Development is continuing at a rapid pace and many new subdivisions are proposed (some already have council consent).
- 2) At this point in time, public transport is almost non-existent. Travel to the main shopping area of Nowra by bus is difficult due to : the time required (the route services many areas), the cost appears exorbitant and there are only two services each day.
- 3) A **Community Strategy** study held recently by **Bay & Basin Community Resources Inc** (BBCRI - Paradise Beach Rd, Sanctuary Point) with input at Public Forums from residents in local suburbs such as Huskisson, Vincentia, Sanctuary Point, St Georges Basin and Tomerong relayed concerns with lack of public transport as an issue in each village. It was also noted that any existing services were infrequent and very expensive.

*Note : The Community Strategy document is incomplete at this point in time but will be available to the community shortly.*

- 4) Some retirement villages and aged care services do supply bus travel to different locations, but this does not supply public transport as such.
- 5) Many of the new subdivisions in the area have been developed away from shopping centres and facilities. There is no bus to service new residents coming into the area.
- 6) Travel to and from shopping centres, medical services and schools require travel by motor vehicles. It is then more practicable for residents to have 2 (or more) vehicles, which puts further strain on existing roads.
- 7) For those families with one vehicle, the family person left at home can be isolated due to lack of public transport making any community facilities inaccessible.

## Roads

- 1) Some of the roads around the St Georges Basin/ Sanctuary Point area are experiencing a marked increase in traffic, due to the influx of many new residents with each new subdivision.
- 2) While efforts can be made to slow this traffic by reduction of the speed limit, in many cases implementation of decreased traffic speeds has not occurred. One local problem at St Georges Basin (Tasman Rd) will again see an increase in the amount of traffic with the completion of an approved subdivision (130 homes proposed) as well as another 15 Lot subdivision close by.
- 3) Some new subdivisions (including the mentioned 130 homes proposal) have narrow roads, which create traffic access problems. This is especially noted where there are cul-de-sacs with development applications approved for villa homes, flats and townhouses
- 4) Shoalhaven City Council has been approached by Forum members (after a recent meeting) to reconsider its zoning policy where these cul-de-sac developments are proposed, but at this stage nothing has occurred. Council officers have suggested the issue may be addressed.

## Medical

- 1) Existing residents of the area have some problems accessing medical practitioners, due to the low number of practitioners in this area.
- 2) Incoming residents also have great difficulty finding a local doctor to treat them, as many doctors have 'closed their books' not accepting new patients
- 3) The doctors themselves are finding it difficult to gain new practitioners or locums to fill in at times of absence due to illness or holidays or other circumstances.  
*(see attachment).*
- 4) This point is qualified by BBCRI's **Community Strategy** (mentioned previously) with the issue of acquiring a local practitioner, one of the frequently raised points.

## Developments

- 1) There are proposals for new developments in the area covered by St Georges Basin Community Forum and concerns have been raised on the impacts of those developments.
- 2) At the present time Shoalhaven City Council is formulating a plan to rezone the large area 'paper subdivision' (Heritage Estates), to enable over 700 properties to be developed. The problems this development would create are many and would include, apart from the environmental impact on the lake of St Georges Basin, increased traffic, transport and medical issues as related above.
- 3) This development is adjacent to another proposal for a large shopping and district centre (known as the Cross Roads development) combined with over 800 homes. The influx of new residents from these two proposals alone will increase strain on existing problems of transport, roads and traffic, medical and the environment.
- 4) Shoalhaven City Council has also been addressing the issue of a number of 'paper subdivisions' in areas around St Georges Basin (Gerbera and Nebraska Estates). If developed these subdivisions will increase numbers of incoming residents looking for services and infrastructure which may not be provided.

*The present problems with roads, transport and medical issues need to be addressed before further large developments such as these are approved.*

## Stormwater & Drainage

In Shoalhaven City Council's "Shoalhaven Community Plan 2005-2010" (see attachment) drainage is listed as one of the most important issues. As the lake of St Georges Basin is at a stage of high sensitivity where any increase of nutrients could damage this unique waterway irreparably (see GeoScience report – attached) and Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) has recognised the need to decrease the flow of nutrients into the lake, (SCC requested GeoScience investigation) **the current budget for stormwater management appears inadequate.**

This clearly needs to be addressed.

***SCC web page on St Georges Basin list issues of foreshore loss due to erosion as; harm from unauthorised clearing and destruction of native vegetation as well as the “ubiquitous development pressures adjacent to the estuary which has the capacity to add a high pollutant load to the waterway”***

Note : Paper subdivision of Heritage Estate with over 700 properties proposed (listed previously) situated on a highly sensitive environmental site on the foreshore of the lake of St Georges Basin.

### **Environmental Impacts of Development**

Impacts on the environment are:

- 1) Clearly linked with the stormwater and drainage issue as related above.
- 2) Shoalhaven City Council’s Tree Preservation Order allows residents to remove trees without notification to council so no indications is given of what is occurring in the catchment area of the lake of St Georges Basin.  
While development applications show trees to be removed, once approval is given there is no way for council (or other authorities) to gain awareness of loss of pockets of bushland or native shrubbery so vital to the health of residents, the lake and the overall environment.
- 3) There are no studies required to assess the cumulative impact of each development on the local environment. This issue needs to be addressed as, was noted previously, the St Georges Basin/Sanctuary Point areas are some of the fastest growing in the state of NSW.

***As it is noted in St Georges Basin Nutrient Survey carried out by Geoscience Australia (attached page 13) the lake “appears highly susceptible to eutrophication if nutrient loads from the catchment were to increase.....” it is clearly evident that cumulative impact assessments are required before future developments are approved.***

### Schools

While St Georges Basin Community Forum has not specifically dealt with the issue of schools (overcrowding) this was seen as one of the issues related at the Public Forums held for the **Community Strategy** document commissioned by Bay & Basin Community Resources Inc (BBCRI).

Finally, I have not enclosed all relevant letters and documents from the files of St Georges Basin Community Forum, believing they may hinder rather than help but ask that your committee take as fact Forum's submission with the understanding further documentation can be supplied if necessary.

Shoalhaven City Council's (SCC) document 'Shoalhaven Community Plan 2005-2010' (enclosed) should assist your committee with future planning, but please note that while SCC's Community Plan does state existing problems with Goals and Strategies to relieve those problems it **does not always follow that solutions will occur**. Residents are mindful that council's Budget and ability to follow through are sometimes questionable.

St Georges Basin Community Forum members look forward to positive actions from your Inquiry and hope our submission is helpful.

Thank you

Maureen Webb  
Secretary

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ATTACHMENT PAGE 3

(MEDICAL)

Saint Georges Basin Medical Centre  
138 Island Point Road  
Saint Georges Basin  
NSW 2540

20<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Saint Georges Basin Community Forum  
PO Box 37  
Saint Georges Basin  
NSW 2540

Dear Sir/Madam

I am write in the hope that your forum will provide me with a letter of support.

As your group knows the Bay & Basin area is under supplied by General Practitioners. New people coming to the area may find it difficult to access a family GP, as most of our general practitioners have closed their books to new patients.

The Government has a system called "Area Of Need" which allows the area designates as Area Of Need to access the overseas trained doctors that are filtering into Australia.

To gain the status "Area Of Need" a local medical centre must make application to the government with supporting letters from local community bodies stating the need for more doctors to service their community.

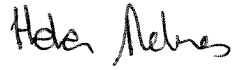
The government looks at;

- Area population
- Socio-economic situations
- Age of population
- Access to public transport and other medical facilities eg hospitals
- Number of present Doctors/per head of established population
- Grow rate of the area

The growing concern in the Bay & Basin area is that the number of doctors who will reach retiring age in the next five years is high. To have an Area Of Need Doctor there must be a supervisor Doctor fully trained and registered by the NSW Medical Board, this supervisory position may have to last for years before the overseas trained Doctor gets fully medical registration in NSW. If we do not get more Area Of Need Doctors soon we may run out of time with our retiring supervisory GP's.

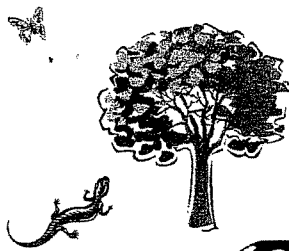
Thank you very much for your time and hopefully a letter of support for the application I hope to submit to the government.

Your truly

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Nelmes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H' and a long, sweeping underline.

Helen Nelmes  
Practice Manager





# ST GEORGES BASIN COMMUNITY FORUM

PO Box 37, St Georges Basin  
NSW 2540

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009



*COPY ATTACHMENT PAGE 3  
MEDICAL*

## **To Whom it May Concern**

St Georges Basin Community Forum is the Principal Consultative Body set up by Shoalhaven City Council. The Forum meets once a month to receive concerns and comments from local people about issues relating to the St Georges Basin area. These concerns are then relayed to council.

The Forum also receives notifications of proposed developments which are brought to the attention of residents attending the monthly meetings. Over the past 5 years there has been a major increase in the number of development applications many of them subdivisions attracting new residents.

There are at this time, proposals for new developments which will again see a dramatic increase in persons residing in the St Georges Basin area (one with over 130 homes has recently been approved by council.)

One of the comments frequently received at Forum meetings about each new subdivision and the increase of new residents has always been the **lack of medical practitioners** in the area and the **difficulties existing residents face** in finding a doctor. This issue has arisen many times and comments concerning subdivisions have been sent to Shoalhaven City Council.

**There is an urgent need for more medical practitioners in the St Georges Basin and Sanctuary Point area to cover the needs of existing and incoming residents.**

Yours sincerely

Maureen Webb  
Secretary

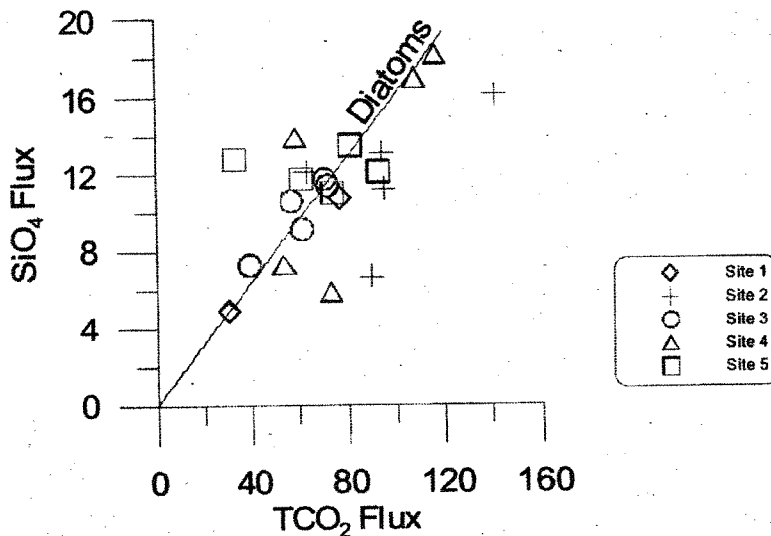


Figure 6. Plot of  $\text{SiO}_4$  fluxes versus  $\text{CO}_2$  fluxes in  $\text{mmol m}^{-2} \text{ day}^{-1}$  for all chambers for all sites. The "diatoms" line represents the ratio of Si:C expected for the breakdown of diatomaceous material.

#### Comparisons with other Australian Estuaries

The rates of organic matter degradation in St Georges Basin were relatively high when compared to other temperate Australian estuaries (Figure 7). The fluxes shown for other estuaries in Figure 7 were measured using similar methods to those used in St Georges Basin, however, they were measured at varying times of the year.

St Georges Basin had the highest median  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_3$  and  $\text{SiO}_4$  fluxes (Figures 7a, c, and d), and the second highest  $\text{O}_2$  consumption rate (Figure 7b). These were measured in late spring, a time of year when we would expect relatively high plant productivity. Benthic fluxes could be even higher in late autumn when plant biomass is decreasing and more dead organic material is falling to the sediments.

St Georges Basin was mesotrophic to eutrophic, according to the trophic classification of Nixon (1995) (Nixon S. W. 1995. Coastal marine eutrophication: a definition, social causes, and future concerns. *Ophelia*. 41, pp 199-219). Mesotrophic estuaries are those with  $\text{CO}_2$  fluxes between 23 and 69  $\text{mmol m}^{-2} \text{ day}^{-1}$ , whereas eutrophic estuaries exhibit  $\text{CO}_2$  fluxes above 69  $\text{mmol m}^{-2} \text{ day}^{-1}$ . Such a high base level of organic matter input could mean the system has little tolerance for any human-induced increase in nutrients and organic matter from the catchment, especially around the edges of the basin where denitrification efficiencies were found to be lower than the central basin site (Figure 5e).

Denitrification efficiencies in St Georges Basin were lower than most other estuaries (Figure 8). This indicated a greater proportion of nitrogen was recycled as bioavailable  $\text{NH}_4$  in St Georges Basin than most other estuaries. Myall Lake was the only estuary with lower denitrification efficiencies. This is significant, considering the denitrification efficiencies for this lake were measured during an algal bloom.

With high respiration rates and low denitrification efficiencies, St Georges Basin appears highly susceptible to eutrophication if nutrient loads from the catchment were to increase. This is especially so for the shallower areas around the edge of the basin. Increases in nutrients from the catchment could likely lead to extensive phytoplankton blooms, and decreased DO. In addition, an increase in phytoplankton biomass can result in shading of seagrass meadows, causing their decline (Butler, A.J. & Jernakoff, P. 1999. *Seagrass in Australia: Strategic Review and Development of an R&D Plan*, FRDC Project 98/223).