



Colac Otway SHIRE

Our Ref: D15/81952

10 November 2015

Juliet Le Feuvre
President
Wye River & Separation Creek Progress Association
Post Office
WYE RIVER VIC 3234

Dear Juliet

Pollution in the Wye River Estuary

Thank you for your letter received on 19 October 2015, and the submission to Council regarding the Domestic Waste Management Plan.

I apologise for the delay in response – Council's Coordinator Health Protection Jonathan Brett, has been gathering contextual information regarding points raised during our meeting in Wye River on 19 September, and as submitted through further correspondence.

The Colac Otway Shire has been, and will continue to be concerned with waterway health within the Shire in general, and the impacts of small scale septic systems on the environment and human health. Three main approaches have been undertaken in the past;

- Water Sampling
- Septic complaint investigation
- Advocacy for sewerage Wye River Separation Creek.

As you stated, in the past the river has been closed for swimming due to high *E. Coli* readings. Historically, water sampling has been undertaken at a number of points and significant counts of indicator bacteria have sporadically been detected. These high counts were not observed at follow-up readings and no patterns were observed with respect to these isolated occurrences. Based on these observations, management options have been to:

1. Warn bathers, by erecting signs during high occupation periods (Christmas/New Year), advising that elevated bacterial readings had been recorded, and
2. Advocate an evaluation for sewerage the settlement, resulting in the SKM Wye River and Separation Creek: Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment and Ecological Risk Assessment VW07110 2014 report.



We appreciate the Group's advice of anecdotal evidence of recurrent illness involving children, and the community view that this is a result of wastewater from the commercial properties during the peak Christmas and summer holiday period. The three systems of concern in this regard are the Wye Beach Hotel, Big 4 Caravan Park and the General Store.

The EPA is the relevant authority for the wastewater management systems operated by the hotel and caravan park, while the store has a septic permit that has been issued by the Council's Health Protection Unit.

Council is keen to work with the Progress Association and Water Watch group at Wye River/Separation Creek in order to improve water quality, and in this regard proposes to:

- Implement the new Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP), when adopted, to improve diffuse sources of river pollution by effluent, and reduce the degree of contaminants entering the river system from septic systems in the towns.
- Investigate point sources of pollution when reported.
- Advocate on behalf of the community to other authorities, in particular the CCMA with respect to their plan/strategy for the waterway and the EPA with respect to environmental monitoring and investigation of the systems used for treatment of effluent by the Wye Beach Hotel and Big 4 Caravan Park.
- Continue placing advisory signs during Christmas/New Year holiday period.

Your Association's concerns raised in the DWMP submission about the future burden to land holders by any user charges introduced to implement the Plan, are acknowledged. An officer report to Council at the 25 November 2015 Council meeting will summarise all submissions and indicate how these have been addressed. In adopting the final version of the DWMP, it is acknowledged that further work is required to be undertaken concerning the range of options available to Council for on-going implementation of the Plan, and any associated funding required.

If you have any inquiries concerning this matter please contact Doug McNeill, Council's Manager Planning Building & Health on 5232 9400.

Yours Sincerely



Brydon King
General Manager, Development & Community Services