



Les Burger Field Recycled Water Irrigation Scheme

Community Consultation Report

MAY 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Tweed Shire Council is proposing to implement a recycled water reuse scheme at the Les Burger Fields whereby potable water used for irrigation of the fields will be supplemented with recycled water from the Hastings Point Wastewater Treatment plant.

Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH) on behalf of Tweed Shire Council prepared an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and an engineering design for the recycled water irrigation scheme. A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) has been conducted to determine the potential impact of the proposal on the environment.

In April - May 2009, Tweed Shire Council conducted a community consultation program for the proposed Recycled Water Irrigation on Les Burger Fields to determine community concerns and issues related to the proposal.

The REF, EMP and Design Drawings were displayed in the Club House at the Les Burger Fields between 23 April and 22 May

Activities Conducted

The community was informed about the proposal and their feedback sought through the following avenues:

1. Tweed Link advertisement on 24 March, 21 April and 28 April 2009 inviting comments from the community and inviting the community to attend information days set up in Les Burger Fields.
2. An information stand set up in Club House at the Les Burger Fields from 23 April to 22 May 2009 consisting of:-
 - Project Documentation/Background information
 - Information Sheets and Case Studies
 - Information on how can the community have input
3. Free call telephone line.
4. Tweed Shire Council website.
5. Reply paid mail.
6. An information Newsletter delivered to the community through Tweed Link on 24 March 2009.
7. Information days conducted by Council officers on 9 and 16 May 2009.

Public Feedback

None of the community members responded during the public comment period by formally lodging a submission. Two phone calls were received related to the proposal and six people approached Councils officers at the information stand at Les Burger Fields with concerns and comments.

Issues Raised

Issues raised by these respondents included concerns about:

- Soil and grass contamination with ecoli bacteria and other pathogens as a result of irrigation with recycled water and effect on field users especially open wound injuries
- Recycled Water quality
- Proposed Irrigation site drainage and potential for storm water contamination
- Potential noise (pop up sprinkle heads) and odour generated by the proposed irrigation
- Effect of proposed irrigation scheme on adjoining properties value and residents lifestyle

This document provides further detail on these issues.

Background

Tweed Shire Council is proposing to implement a recycled water reuse scheme at the Les Burger Fields whereby potable water used for irrigation of the fields will be supplemented with recycled water from the Hastings Point Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP).

The recycled water reuse scheme proposed for Les Burger Field is part of Council's Recycled Water Reuse Strategy, which was adopted in July 2006. This strategy is based on the report prepared by Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH) titled "Tweed Shire Council Recycled Water Opportunities Concept Report" February 2006. This report identifies opportunity of reusing up to 19 ML/year of recycled water from Hastings Point WWTP on Les Burger Fields.

The proposal consists of construction of the recycled water rising main from Hastings Point WWTP, booster pumping station, recycled water storage tank and existing irrigation system upgrade. The water will be irrigated to the field as required.

MWH on behalf of Tweed Shire Council prepared an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and an engineering design for recycled water irrigation scheme.

A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) has been conducted to determine the potential impact of the proposal on the environment.

In April - May 2009, Tweed Shire Council conducted a community consultation program for the proposed Recycled Water Irrigation on Les Burger Fields to determine community concerns and issues related to the proposal.

The REF, EMP and Design Drawings were displayed in the Club House at the Les Burger Fields between 23 April and 22 May

Two information days were attended by Council officers to answer questions and concerns related to the proposed irrigation scheme in particular comments on the REF identified issues.

KEY FINDINGS/OUTCOMES

Information Dissemination

Community consultation activities centred on the release of the REF for public comments between May 4 and May 18, 2009 as part of the Development Application approval process and included an information stand at the Club House at Les Burger Fields which was attended by council officers on 9 May and 16 May.

The following activities were conducted to disseminate information to the community and gain feedback on the proposed irrigation scheme and the REF:

Activity	Summary	Quantity	Dates
Tweed Link advertisements	Media release promoting commencement of community consultations and public comment period	2 releases	24/03/09 and 21/04/09
Displays	Copies of REF and EMP on display at Tweed Shire Council offices and information stand set up in Club House at les Burger Fields	3 display venues	From 23/04/09 to 20/05/09
Free call phone line	A free call phone line was maintained and staffed by TSC during the public comment period	4 calls received	
Tweed Shire Council website	A TSC website containing REF and EMP documents, newsletter and other relevant information on was established	1 site	From 19/11/07 – on going
Reply paid mail	A reply paid mail was offered to the community	Nil received	
Newsletter/Media Release	Mailed Newsletter/media release to all Tweed Shire Council residents in Tweed link issue	Over 38,000 Newsletters mailed	24/03/09
Information days	Information days in Les Burger Fields conducted by Council officers to answer questions and concerns	2 days	9/05/09 and 16/05/09

Public Participation

From over 38,000 community members who received the newsletter and those who were also exposed to media coverage, only 3 stakeholders responded during the public comment period. The methods by which people commented are as follows:

Method	Number
Free call line	4 calls
Information days	6 people
Email	5 emails
Submissions	0 submissions

Issues Summary

Issues raised during the public comment period include:

Soil and grass contamination with ecoli bacteria and other pathogens as a result of irrigation with recycled water and effect on field users especially open wound injuries

Concern about contamination of playing fields grass with ecoli bacteria and other pathogens as a result of irrigation activities. Main concern is that residual of ecoli bacteria on the grass can affect injured players with open wounds and scratches infecting them with some potentially dangerous disease. Also concerns are raised that contaminated grass can affect player's health and wellbeing through contact with grass.

Recycled Water quality

Concern of the effluent quality

Proposed Irrigation site drainage and potential for storm water contamination

Concern that recycled water from the WWTP will pollute storm water runoff and contaminate the storm water drainage system especially in poorly drained areas.

Odour

Perception that the area irrigated with recycled water will emit offensive odours.

Noise

Concern that the proposed irrigation system pop up sprinkles which will operate at night will create unacceptable level of noise and adversely affect adjoining residences.

Effect of proposed irrigation scheme on adjoining properties value and residents lifestyle

Concern that the proposal will adversely affect adjoining properties values.

Positive feedback

- Can see sense in reusing the resource
- Fields will be green all year around
- Cost savings in running the fields

Conclusion

Extremely low response rate suggests that there is an equally low level of concern in the broader community regarding the proposed recycled water reuse in general, and the proposal for Les burger Fields. Positive comments were received from the community by phone and email and from people approaching Council officers during information days at Les Burger Fields.

Majority of the issues raised are adequately addressed in REF. However, the issues raised by respondents to the community consultation program during the public comment period are important elements to be incorporated in the scheme implementation process wherever technically, socially, environmentally and financially feasible.