



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

11th October 2005

DSS7 JERSEYVILLE SEWERAGE SCHEME
FILE: S8-1 SLM

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the progress of the Jerseyville sewerage system.

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At the Council meeting of 13th September 2005 Council resolved to temporarily suspend the installation of a low-pressure grinder pump (LPGP) system until further public consultation was completed.

A public meeting was held Wednesday 28th September at the CWA Hall at South West Rocks. This meeting was attended by Keith Finnie (Director), Sharon McLanders, Councillor Gribbin and Councillor McWilliam and 22 Jerseyville property owners. A number of issues were raised:

- Majority were saying that the pump station is already there, why not just go ahead with the normal gravity system? The Director confirmed that the LPGP was cheaper and overcame the environmental issues.
- Council only wants the LPGP system as it is cheaper for Council.
- Council has referred to the LPGP system as a trial. What guarantees do the Jerseyville residents have that it will operate well and be repaired when required? The Director confirmed either system would be maintained by Council.
- One resident said he has a letter from Andrew Stoner saying he will support getting a subsidy for sewerage – The Director spoke about the issue for getting any subsidy for Jerseyville.
- What is included in connection cost? – The Director advised all items covered for LPGP system.
- What is the difference in maintenance costs to the residents for LPGP and gravity? – The Director advised nil.
- Ownership of units and why an easement required if Council owns pumps etc? - Initial investigations and discussions with other Councils revealed that most prefer to leave ownership with the property owners due to the pump chamber and

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electrical box being connected to the residence. It also allowed ease of relocation for the property owner in the case of building extensions.

- Part payment of fees and if there was any interest? - Previous sewerage backlog areas have had signed agreements for property debt loans which are signed by the property owner. The document states the cost, a maximum payment period (quarterly over 5 years), the interest payable (interest rate for Council's loan) and that the loan is attached to the property and will be recovered if transferred ownership.
- Could the previous unconnected sewer rates be taken off the total connection fee?
- Would Council consider dropping connection fee all together?
- KSC Parkland (where pump station was installed) was totally destroyed with over 30 trees being cut.
- No discussions were held with residents prior to pump station being installed.
- How will the LPGP system operate in floods? The Director advised that either system would be similarly impacted by floods.
- Is the sewerage issue the only thing stopping development in Jerseyville? – The Director advised that this is not the case, the major issue would be flooding.
- When is any sewerage system expected to be installed when accepted? – Anticipated commencement date is March April 2006.

The residents of Jerseyville also supplied a survey from the area detailing the preferred option. 21 properties were included with 19 agreeing to some sort of sewerage system being installed. From these 19, only 3 preferred the LPGP system.

Following the meeting, a number of residents remained to discuss further the possibility of removing or reducing the costs. The impression from these discussions was that if they were not disadvantaged more than any other resident in Kempsey Shire due to the costs, they would agree to the LPGP system.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Due to the location of Jerseyville adjacent to the Macleay River, the existing septic tank systems are polluting the groundwater, which is just below the surface. This in turn is most likely to affect the adjacent river water quality, both from groundwater and surface water flows.

Acid sulphate soils have also been discovered only 0.8m below the surface.

Lot sizes are such that the required absorption trenching for septic systems cannot be provided.

The LPGP system has pipe work which is considerably shallower to install than normal gravity systems, so there will be less environmental issues. Therefore the LPGP system is the preferred system for Jerseyville.

- *Social*

The landowners have been advised that the existing on-site disposal system should be upgraded to a system that has less environmental impacts. Public consultation has resulted in a split response from the local residents on which system is preferred.

The major issue appears to be the cost to the property owner in addition to the normal sewerage charge. Ideas such as reducing the connection fee and removing the \$100/year maintenance fee were brought forward by the residents. For the number of properties involved, the level of concern and amount recovered, the removal of the maintenance fee seems justifiable.

- *Economic (Financial)*

The current budget for the scheme is \$400,000, with approximately \$250,000 remaining to complete the project.

The estimated cost of LPGP sewer is estimated to be \$10,000 per lot. Council has accepted the proposal to charge an upfront installation fee of \$2,000 per lot but this could be increased to \$2,500 or \$3,000 per lot to reduce the burden to Council. This is seen as replacing the usual subsidy provided by the State.

No State Government subsidy is available to such areas.

- *Policy or Statutory*

None

- *Director's Review*

Council is urged to determine this matter and adopt the recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That the concept of installing a LPGP sewerage system for Jerseyville be confirmed.**
- 2. That the ownership of the E-ONE system inside the property be by the property owner, with a maintenance**

agreement with Council regarding Council access and servicing requirements.

3. That the cost for the LPGP maintenance agreement be removed from Council's Fees and Charges.
4. That the installation fee be set at \$2,500 per lot.

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K J Finnie
DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES