



## Noosa Waters Residents Association Inc

PO Box 197, NOOSAVILLE, QLD 4566

16 April 2013

Sent via email to:

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Copy to:

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[Denis.Shaw@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:Denis.Shaw@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

Dear John,

### **NOOSA WATERS WATERWAYS PROBLEMS**

#### **1. REPORT FROM SOIL SURVEYS**

At a meeting of engineers on 11 December 2012 it was agreed that further investigation work was required to enable finalisation of approved plans for the re-stabilisation works for the Noosa Waters revetment walls. All parties agreed that this was urgently required because of the continuing deterioration of revetment walls and therefore increasing cost.

Council contracted Soil Surveys to undertake this investigative work and it was agreed that the Engineering Report would be available by mid February. You will recall that following the Council meeting on 31 January 2013, during the discussion between Chris, Denis, yourself, Ron Koyich, Dick Patterson and myself that you agreed to provide us, without any qualifications, with a copy of the Engineering Report as soon as it was received.

After recent persistent follow up of the CEO of Soil Surveys I was advised yesterday afternoon by him that their Engineering Report had just been emailed to you.

We do not understand why this Report, which all parties agreed was urgently required, has been received so late. The draft report was ready for review by the directors of Soil Survey about the third week of February. We have not been able to find out why it has taken eight weeks to be delivered to Council. Denis or Chris should be able to inform you of the reason for the delay as they have no doubt been following up Soil Surveys from the mid February due date on at least a weekly basis.

The property owners of the revetment walls that have been affected by slumping and also those whose land between their revetment walls and homes has subsided and suffered loss of soil through elution are unable to proceed until this report has been received by them. Clearly, it is pivotal that we urgently receive a copy of the engineering report so that

appropriate work can be carried out on failing revetment walls. The delays in this process have contributed to further loss and greater repair costs.

I note that Soil Surveys have been requested to only send a draft engineering report to you and not Council's engineers who commissioned the work. I understand why drafts are requested in some cases and also why documents are sent directly to Solicitors. We do not expect that Council's engineers would dispute the findings of experts who have carried out the on-site investigations. If you do not find any references that may concern you e.g. "canal" rather than "lake" in the report we would expect that you would be able to release it to us immediately.

We therefore hope that you will be able to forward the Engineering Report as promised and it will not become another broken promise in this saga which has been going on for nearly two years. When sending the Engineering Report please email it to Dick Patterson and me.

## **2. RECENT BACKGROUND**

During January and early February we provided all of our survey data to Soil Surveys, including the results of the recent assessment of the number of undermined revetment walls. Our survey showed that over 40% of revetment walls are now undermined. We have continued to maintain contact and provide assistance to them as required.

The initial design work agreed at the meeting of engineers on 11 December 2012 was only a short term measure and was subject to further investigative work; including DCP testing and analysis that Soil Surveys was contracted to carry out. The Engineers at the meeting advised that no engineer would sign off on any works until this engineering report was finalised and issued. As a result contractors have only fixed piles to some failing revetment walls. Until the report has been received contractors will not lay geo-fabric, blue metal and stones.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTENANCE OF REVETMENT WALLS, THE CANAL/LAKE BED AND CONSTRUCTED PROFILE**

We understand that the Engineering Report confirms the problem has been the slumping of the 1:3 batters causing undermining of the revetment walls. Clearly at least some of the material in the canal/lake system cannot support the 1:3 batters. Hopefully why this occurred will be explained in the Report.

This slumping was identified in the Hydro graphic survey (carried out in January 2012) and our initial investigations which we passed on to Council in August 2011. The results of the DCP testing will be of critical importance in determining how much material can be safely placed into the waterway up to five metres out from revetment walls.

At the time we raised the problem in July 2011 we acknowledged that the concrete component revetment wall is contained within the property owners' title. The boundaries extend a small variable distance, e.g. 30 cm into the waterway. But, as we have pointed out, the revetment is a complex comprising the batter, the footings, the concrete wall, hydrostatic management, appropriate drainage and back fills. They are functionally integral to each other.

You agree that Council is Trustee of the waterways.

The Minister believes that Council is responsible for maintaining the canal/lake bed including the constructed profiles. I note that, up to our discussion on 31 January 2013 you do not agree with the Minister's view.

We suggest that whether you are right or the Minister is right, it should not change how Council proceeds. The Council should look after their rate payers interests not expect them to run large projects and individually implement complex and difficult solutions.

#### **4. RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS**

##### **4.1 Council co-ordinate rectification works**

Council, at the very least, should co-ordinate the rectification works for all of the Noosa Waters' canal/lake system. This would include the design, tenders, letting of contracts, supervision and engineering sign off of the works required to stabilise the canal/lake bed/floor, batters and revetments walls. A consistent process/treatment, subject to individual property considerations, must be adopted.

It is not economical, efficient or practical to insist that property owners must arrange the works themselves. There is in total some 15,000 cubic metres of material required to restabilise the revetment walls. Of course, this project could be undertaken over a number of years with initial urgent attention given to the worst areas.

##### **4.2 Funding of rectification works**

At the engineers meeting, on 11 December 2012, all parties agreed that the cost of rectifying the problems for all the Noosa Waters canals was in the region of \$2.6 to \$3 million. About 40% of revetment walls need immediate attention to prevent further deterioration.

We would suggest that there are three options that Council will need to consider to fund the rectification works:

- (a) Council pays 100%;
- (b) Council pays a percentage and canal front property owners pay a percentage (via a benefited levy); and
- (c) Canal front property owners pay 100% percentage via a benefited levy.

##### **4.3 Budget for works in 2013/2014**

It is nearly two years since this problem was first brought to Council's attention for urgent action. We still do not yet have solutions let alone the commencement of works. In the meantime the problem gets worse and the costs to rectify the problems are steadily increasing.

We consider that it is absolutely essential that Council take immediate steps to:

- (a) Finalise rectification designs and develop appropriate plans to enable Council co-ordination of the works.
- (b) Determine how they will be funded;
- (c) Ensure monies are available in the 2013/2014 budget;
- (d) Physically commence the rectification works ASAP but with a target of starting on-site no later than 1 July 2013.

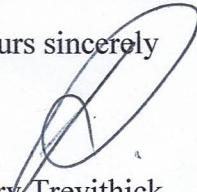
Dick and I had a meeting with Councillors Green and Wellington last Thursday. Cr Green then called your CEO who has given Cr Green an assurance he will get back to him this week on how he can progress this matter with a greater sense of urgency. Please contact John Knaggs if you need any help in getting this matter expedited.

John, as you are aware we have been very frustrated by the continuous delays in getting action from Council on this matter. It is coming up to two years since the problems were identified and advised to Council for urgent attention.

At all times we have tried to co-operate with Council on this problem in the spirit of our Partnering Charter.

Please contact me if we can further assist Council in anyway.

Yours sincerely



Gary Trevithick  
President