

STUARTS POINT SEWERAGE SCHEME

DECEMBER 2022

PROJECT SUMMARY

Kempsey Shire Council is committed to delivering a modern wastewater management system to the communities of Stuarts Point, Grassy Head and Fishermans Reach.

This project is a priority in Council's forward program to provide and enhance Kempsey Shire sewerage infrastructure.

What has changed?

Delivery of the Stuarts Point Sewerage Scheme is regrettably not expected until at least 2025.

This unavoidable delay, of up to 18 months, is required despite Kempsey Shire Council advocating for quicker alternatives, as the project must seek consent under the NSW state government's complex approval pathway.

Council had hoped to deliver the project sooner but could not find an agreement with the state government.

Detailed update

- Planning and constructing the Stuarts Point Sewerage Scheme is a highly complex project impacted by state government environmental and planning legislation.
- It was previously believed that construction tenders could be called in the 2022-2023 financial year subject to the necessary approvals.
- Legal advice has confirmed that the approvals required are far more complex than first anticipated due to planning provisions within State Environmental Planning Policies.
- Development consent for the project is required and the value of the project means it is classed as a state significant development and therefore the Department of Planning and Environment become the consent authority.
- The approval pathway requires significant environmental reporting including preparation and public exhibition of an Environmental Impact Statement.
- Council have sought multiple legal opinions and advocated with the State local member but there are no alternatives to this legislated planning pathway at this stage.
- This approval process is likely to delay the project by up to 18 months, with connection to properties not expected before 2025.
- Council regrets this delay and understands the community frustration.
- Rising groundwater levels such as those experienced in the last two years impact onsite sewer systems but these systems aren't the cause of the rising water.
- The groundwater issues will continue to be monitored and managed separate to the new sewer scheme project.

Kempsey Shire Council acknowledges the land of the Thungutti/Dunghutti Nation. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the role of emerging leaders to continue to guide us in the future. We acknowledge the Stolen Generations and the need to change practices to be inclusive. This land always was and always will be Thungutti/Dunghutti land.



What happens next?

The State Significant Development process now requires Council to:

1. Prepare a scoping report that identifies what information needs to be included in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and what consultation must be undertaken
2. Prepare an EIS in accordance with state government guidelines
3. Have the EIS reviewed by a Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner
4. Submit the EIS for assessment by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)
5. Place the EIS on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days, with submissions being made to DPE who will publish all submissions as a report on the NSW Planning Portal
6. Provide DPE with a response to the submissions report
7. Await the assessment report from DPE followed by their determination
8. Upon approval, seek the necessary additional approvals to commence construction.

Background

In December 2018, Council resolved to pursue the construction of a wastewater treatment plant near Stuarts Point rather than the previously proposed pipe transfer to the South West Rocks plant.

The NSW Government has provided \$6.63 million in funding to help construct the project under the Regional Water and Waste Water Backlog Program with the remaining cost to be funded by Council.

The key driver for the Sewerage Scheme is addressing the issues with existing treatment systems in use in the villages. Council is focused on providing the most sustainable sewerage service to benefit and meet the needs of the whole community.

The Sewerage Scheme will provide reticulated sewer to the villages of Stuarts Point, Grassy Head and Fishermans Reach.

In May 2021, following months of negotiations, Council and the Kempsey Local Aboriginal Land Council struck their first ever Deed of Agreement, which enabled Council to acquire land in Stuarts Point crucial to the delivery of the sewer project previously subject to an unresolvable land rights claim.

The Stuarts Point collection network masterplan design was completed in September 2021. The modern wastewater management system resulting from this project will have numerous benefits for the entire area, including a positive environmental impact by reducing onsite sewage system leakage, eliminating odour and water quality issues.

Residents, visitors and primary producers will all benefit from the Sewerage Scheme.

In May 2022 Geotechnical investigations at the site of the sewage treatment plant and dunal discharge site commenced. Council also completed Network and Treatment Plant Concept Designs for the scheme. This enabled the planning assessment to commence with defined pipe routes, plant footprint and scheme investigations.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Stuarts Point Sewerage Scheme head to www.ksc.pub/stuarts-point

For all other Council matters head to www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au

