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Desalination approval for the future

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Media Release:

Desalination approval for the future

A desalination plant at Toukley sewage treatment plant, which is a future option in the recommended *WaterPlan 2050* strategy, was granted conditional approval by the NSW Government this week.

Wyong Shire Council Mayor Bob Graham said that the approval was part of Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils' long term planning, however this was not a decision to go ahead with the construction of a desalination plant.

“The Councils have included a 20 million litre per day desalination plant as a future option in *WaterPlan 2050* as an important back up, should conditions worsen.

“But I want to stress to the community that we have not made a decision to go ahead with this desalination plant.

“Desalination is expensive but it is a good option of last resort as it's not weather dependent. With possible future climate change it is important that we know it would be available if needed.”

Should the desalination plant be needed, the discharge would be released through the ocean outfall at Norah Head. Mayor Graham said that by doing this the Councils could actually reduce the impact of the current low salinity water in the ocean outfall.

“The discharge from the plant will increase the salinity of the effluent currently discharged to a level closer to that of sea water” he said.

Gosford City Mayor Laurie Maher said that the Councils were aware of the community's concern over desalination but that all options had to be considered.

“We know that some members of the community are concerned about the impacts of desalination, that is why we have always ensured that is an option of last resort, however we must be prepared for what the future may hold.

“The Councils have committed to green power options for the powering of such a plant, should it become necessary, to reduce the impact on green house gas emissions.

“The state government approval includes a range of other conditions, targeted at protecting the environment during construction and operation of the plant. The Councils support these conditions and should the plant be built will ensure any environmental impacts are minimised.”

The Gosford / Wyong Councils' Water Authority will consider the community feedback on the recommended *WaterPlan 2050* at the Board meeting tomorrow.