

Date: 6 Dec 2018

To: Councillor Amanda Findley, , Councillor Annette Alldrick, Councillor Nina Digiglio, Councillor Andrew Guile, Councillor John Wells, Councillor Joanna Gash, Councillor John Levett, , Councillor Mitchell Pake, Councillor Greg Watson, Councillor Kaye Gartner, Councillor Mark Kitchene, Councillor Bob Proudfoot, Councillor Patricia White

Dear Councillors,

Given present entrance conditions and advice received from Council Staff to date, the Conjola Community has requested the Conjola Community Association (Conjola CCB) write to all Shoalhaven City Councillors to enquire as to why Council Staff are only considering the 'Emergency Opening' procedure under the *Interim Entrance Management Policy 2013* for Lake Conjola and not the Community preferred option of a 'Planned Opening' procedure?

More specifically, the 'Planned Opening' option preferred by the Community is available to Council to act upon, given lake water level at time of writing is 0.76m AHD and approaching the nominated trigger level of 0.8m AHD required to activate this procedure. As intended, the 'Planned Opening' procedure can be implemented and allows time for preparatory works for a sizable pilot channel on the northern side, as outlined on Page 5 and detailed in Appendix C of the current *Interim Entrance Management Policy 2013*.

The Community is dissatisfied with Council's favoured 'Emergency Opening' procedure, because it is a continuation of an ineffective management approach from over twenty years ago, contributes to low-level flooding and is contrary to the *Interim Entrance Management Policy* objective of mitigating low-level flooding. This is largely attributed to the 'Emergency Opening' trigger level of 1.2m AHD being 200mm higher than the 1.0m AHD for a 'Planned Opening'. Which is counter-intuitive to mitigating low-level flooding, as the higher trigger level of 1.2m AHD (and subsequent trial of even higher lake water levels over the past 5 'Emergency Openings') causes greater flood damage to public and private assets.

In light of this and available supporting evidence, the Conjola CCB respectfully requests Shoalhaven Councillors give due consideration to the Community's repeated request for 'Planned Opening' procedures to be implemented (when appropriate to do so) and awaits your earliest written advice on the matter. Particularly given Council Staff's preference and the likelihood of further rainfall into the catchment over the next week, or two.

Additionally, the Conjola CCB takes this opportunity to advise Shoalhaven Councillors that the Community has sought to review the *Interim Entrance Management Policy* with Council Staff since rejecting it in 2011, with a view to replacing it with the scientifically recommended 'Managed Entrance' option proposed by Patterson Britton Partners' "*Lake Conjola Entrance Study*" 1999. The 'Managed Entrance' was partially implemented in the same year (1999) when emergency dredging and entrance works were undertaken to realign the southern ebb channel with the entrance and arrest erosion of the ancient sand dune - resulting in an open entrance between 1999 and 2011 with no water quality issues and one minor storm surge event in 2004. Moreover, the 'Managed Entrance' option mimics natural processes and the entrance condition known as the Regime Entrance. Similar entrance plans have been adopted by Northern Beaches Council for Narrabeen Lake and Lagoon, Central Coast Council for Tuggerah Lake, and Byron Shire Council for Tallow Creek and Belongil Creek - all of which are largely funded by State Government Agencies.

With this in mind, the Conjola CCB encloses the attached document for your consideration and respectfully requests the opportunity to present the Community's case for a 'Managed Entrance' policy to all Councillors and awaits your earliest replies.

In closing, should you require further information regarding these requests, please do not hesitate to contact the Conjola Community Association at the earliest. Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully, Robyn Kerves - President, Conjola Community Association