

Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook Inc.

Port Hinchinbrook residents wish Port Hinchinbrook woes onto local Council

The Tully Times is to be congratulated for exposing the latest move to get Cardwell Shire Council to pay the ongoing costs of canal maintenance dredging, sewage disposal and roadway maintenance at the bedevilled Port Hinchinbrook Stage I residential/canal estate.

Port Hinchinbrook Services (the body corporate for Port Hinchinbrook) wants the Council to buy the Port Hinchinbrook sewage treatment plant from developer Keith Williams.

ASH has been reliably informed that Keith Williams, through one of his several companies, has a controlling interest in Port Hinchinbrook Services (PHS). In other words, the Port Hinchinbrook residents are representing the interests of the developer as well as their own.

The dredging liabilities may be higher than Port Hinchinbrook residents are presently aware. The huge dredge spoil stockpile adjacent to Girrimay National Park must be removed.

According to the Tully Times, Cr Scuderi pointed out that Keith Williams' promise to provide sewerage and water to Cardwell Shire Council *before* he started Port Hinchinbrook in 1994 has not been honoured. The Port Hinchinbrook development however has its own sewage treatment plant.

After 12 years of property sales at Port Hinchinbrook, it seems that there are too few residents there to create enough sewage for the Port Hinchinbrook treatment plant to work properly, even when dog food (so we have been informed) has been added to bulk it up.

Ms Moorhouse said: "We can see that Port Hinchinbrook residents are in an unfortunate position. It is wishful thinking however to suppose that Keith Williams or the local Council will bail them out. Port Hinchinbrook residents freely signed the purchase contracts which have led to their present situation."

Local real estate agent Lindsay Hallam and contractor John Wood have pictured the silt-bedevilled marina and canal access as being cured of its long standing problems just because of the new breakwalls, claiming that no dredging will be required for six years. "In this case" said Ms Moorhouse "you have to wonder why the haste to get the Council to take over the costs of the dredging now."

Ms Moorhouse said "when Mr Williams wanted approval for his dinosaur development he was very prominent in the media, but the facilities he promised have never eventuated."

"Worse, he now wants the township to bear the brunt of the costs resulting from his commercial decision to build a harbour against government engineering advice. But he hasn't seen fit to front Cardwell residents to explain to them why they should pay when a developer's commercial risk doesn't come off."

From the outset, State and local governments ignored conservationists' warnings of these outcomes. The 1977 and 1980 Harbours and Marine Department studies plainly stated that the Oyster Point site was not suitable as a boat harbour because it lacked natural deep water, was flood prone and subject to siltation.

The dredging has resulted in another, hidden, liability. Ms Moorhouse said "Something like 800,000 cubic metres of acid dredge spoil have been dumped in a series of retention ponds adjacent to a kilometre of the boundary with Girrimay National Park. Thousands of national park trees are already dead and more will die until the spoil is removed. The cost will run into millions. Will this too be foisted onto Cardwell council?"

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SEE ALSO <http://www.hinchinbrook.info/other/ASH%20contact.php>
and www.hinchinbrook.info