

Dear *To WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.*

I am writing to you regarding the recent catastrophic floods and the state of the river. I wrote letters to the editor of the Advocate 5th March, 19th April, 10th May 2017 in reference to this matter (what a shame the publication was terminated) at that time I made reference to the buildup of sand and silt in the river and North Creek.

When I came to Ballina in 1983 these two water ways were the focal point of the town and a great attraction to visitors with good fishing and clean waterways. There were two dredges, one in the river and one in North Creek, however for whatever reason they were removed. Since that time we have seen massive buildup of sand and silt in both the river and North Creek.

Not long after I wrote the letters to the paper Ballina had a visit from the Premier Gladys Berejcklian and she made the comment at time, which was published, that the river was a disgrace and the current and passed councils should be ashamed of themselves for letting the waterways get into such a state. She also allocated \$750 000 for River Rectification. What happened to that funding? I have enclosed copies of my letters and a letter written by Councilor Cr Keith Williams who took a photo of the top end of North Creek. The date of his letter is around the same time as my submissions. The cost of dredging as Cr Williams estimated in his letter to the Advocate pales into insignificance when you look at the loss of lives and property in this latest disaster.

To me it is common sense. It is like if you blocked your downpipe where it runs into the gutter, the water backs up into the guttering and overflows and gets into your eaves and roof. Hence with the current situation in the mouth of the river, with the massive buildup of sand and silt in the river generally the water coming down can't flush out and banks up and floods Ballina. Unless something is done to free up the flow of water (especially at flood times) we can expect worst floods in the future.

Ballina

5/3/2017

G

Re The River

2 messages

To: ballinaadvocate@northernstar.com.au

I have no intention of becoming a serial "letter to the editor" writer (as some people are) however I feel I must respond to (Advocate 26th April) comment on my letter regarding dredging the river and North Creek. He states that the river was doing fine long before dredges were invented. True, but what era are we talking about? Is it when Captain Henry Fenwick sailed into the river and moored his ship in the site where the Shaws Bay hotel is? Or the deep water frontage in North Creek where the Ex- Service Men's home is? Since that time the break walls and the new Missingham bridge have been built. This has no doubt resulted in a change to all the natural current flows. I might also add that these two structures would have been designed by engineers.

stated that he was first and foremost an engineer and not an environmentalist, yet he still didn't put forward any suggestions of how to remedy the problem. He also stated that he couldn't see his paddle in the water in North Creek or in the river but in the Tweed River he could clearly see the bottom. Readers might be interested to know that there has been dredging going on in the Tweed River between north of Dodd's island to Barney's Point for some time. Maybe that has something to do with it.

Every person that has commented to me about my letter agreed that the river needs dredging. These are people who have lived here long enough to see the dramatic changes in the river and North Creek. Anyway you paddle your boat and I will paddle mine

Ballina

10:

[Quoted text hidden]

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YO



ballinaadvocate@northernstar.com.au

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River needs dredging

I HAVE no intention of becoming a serial "letter to the editor" writer (as some people are) however I feel I must respond to [redacted]

(Advocate April 26) comment on my letter regarding dredging the river and North Creek.

He states that the river was doing fine long before dredges were invented. True, but what era are we talking about? Is it when Captain Henry Fenwick sailed into the river and moored his ship in the site where the Shaws Bay Hotel is? Or the deep water frontage in North Creek where the ex-servicemen's home is?

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Every person that has commented to me about my letter agreed the river needs dredging. These are people who have lived here long enough to see the dramatic changes in the river and North Creek.

Anyway [redacted], you paddle your boat and I will paddle mine.

[redacted]
Ballina

entire Richmond Valley, let's hope this is the start of a river revival, otherwise we'll continue to stand on the banks of our river counting dead fish, dead oysters, few tourists and watch the river's future going down the gurgler.

[redacted]
West Ballina

environmentalists?

If so, they have created a great proportion of the current (no pun intended) problem.

I haven't read any suggestion of dredging in the current discussion about how to improve the waterways.

[redacted]
Ballina

Dredge waterways

WHEN I arrived in Ballina over 33 years ago, the two waterways (the Richmond River and North Creek) were the focal point of the town.

They were free running deep clean waterways aided by the two permanent dredges.

Then the dredges were removed and they built the new Missingham Bridge.

These two factors in my opinion has led to the river and North Creek silting up to an unbelievable extent.

So now we have what I describe as a blocked drain that can't flush itself out as it used to in the past.

The result is now that any debris or pollutant that comes down the river system gets trapped and settles.

Why can't the dredges be brought back?

Is it another victory for the so called

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Facebook.com/BallinaShireAdvocate f



CHANNEL NARROWING: Cr Keith Williams writes about the urgent need to dredge North Creek in Ballina, pictured on Monday at low tide, as its channel is narrowing.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

the Ballina Shire, nor indeed anyone in the Northern Rivers, would think was a good idea.

Another aspect of the proposal is very small blocks and no formalisation of the beach carpark at Sharpes Beach.

Please try and get along to truly understand what is being proposed and give them your frank feedback.

— [REDACTED]
Ballina

State of dredging

WHILE I agree with much of [REDACTED] letter (Advocate, 17/5) and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] previous contributions about the priorities for river health, dredging also needs to be part of fixing our river, as [REDACTED] suggested (10/5).

In North Creek, dredging gets more urgent by the day. Soon it will be easier to walk between the bridges than go by boat.

In this case, dredging has the environmental benefit of restoring salt water flow to

the critical fish breeding habitat in the Ballina Nature Reserve and our upstream oyster growers.

Council is still working its way through the business case and environmental approvals process to dredge the sand on a commercial basis.

The project continues to stack up, but it's painfully slow and the State Government could help speed this process up.

Dredging the bar is, however, entirely a State Government matter.

And it's not about the environment, it's about people and our economy.

We know from the studies done so far there is so much sand movement that dredging would need to be frequent and expensive – about \$4 million a year.

A viable long term solution is a sand-pumping jetty, about half the size of the one that operates at the Tweed.

An upfront cost around \$25 million and \$500,000 pa to operate, it would be cheaper

than dredging within eight years.

And the benefit: no more deaths traversing a dangerous bar, a viable fishing industry, marine tourism, re-opening slipways, building, repairing and supplying boats, marina's not just full of locals, but visitors spending their hard earned in our town.

Employment, so the kids leaving our new super high school and our highly regarded TAFE have a future here.

Bridges and training walls have modified the estuary so that sand builds up in places it never used to.

The beach at Lennox has receded 15m due to sand trapped at South Ballina.

I'm sure the sand would be more appreciated at Lennox, much more than a ski jump (but that's another letter).

We should all be alarmed at the death of oysters throughout the estuary.

This is a place of the

FROM PAGE 6

oysters after all.

Ballina council will roll out its first ever healthy waterways program this year.

With goodwill and resources also coming from groups such as OzFish Unlimited, Richmond Landcare groups, Rous County Council, Lismore City Council and Local Land Services, we will begin the work of repairing decades of neglect.

But we need the State Government to come on board, not just with piecemeal grant opportunities, but with a plan to restore the river and revitalise our marine industries, to make the most of the opportunities a healthy and accessible river will provide.

— [REDACTED]
Tintenbar

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