



CLARENCE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE INC

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Date: 4th June 2017

Attn Acting General Manager
Clarence Valley Council
council@clarence.nsw.gov.au

Comment

to Clarence Valley Council on information pertaining to waste dumping at the old Tyson St Sewerage Works

Dear Acting General Manager

The Clarence Environment Centre has maintained a shop-front presence in Grafton for over 28 years, and has a proud history of environmental advocacy. As a result, the Centre was heavily involved in the shameful saga surrounding Council's dealing with the asbestos dumping at Tyson St.

Council has now asked that: *"People with first-hand knowledge of waste disposal on the site of the former sewage treatment plant in South Grafton have been invited to share that information with the Clarence Valley Council"*. However, can I point out that because the dumping of asbestos is an illegal act, people with first hand knowledge of that dumping will be very reluctant to come forward for fear of legal consequences. In fact we have been led to understand that the original informant was told he should be very careful about what he said for that very reason.

The Clarence Environment Centre is keen to see those that ordered the dumping to be held accountable, but find it difficult to understand Council's motive for stipulating that the information relate only to dumping after 2004.

We also wonder why Council does not question former managers of the site about the history of dumping way back to the County Council days. Most importantly we question why the focus of any investigation by Council would not look into the facts surrounding Council's repeated refusal to accept the information that had been provided to it about the dumping, a decision that subsequently cost ratepayers over 8 million dollars.

In terms of what "first-hand knowledge" the Environment Centre can provide, I have to report we have none. However, as we reported on a number of occasions to both council and councillors, upon hearing that decades of asbestos burial had occurred at the site, we contacted two retired council employees independently, both of whom assured us that the practice was common knowledge amongst employees at the time.

Naturally, the Centre will not be providing the names of those informants because neither was involved first hand.

Yours sincerely

John Edwards (Honorary Secretary)