

To the Essential Services Commission.

Could I begin by thanking the ESC for a most helpful and informative session at Leongatha on 29 April. The assurance from the ESC that Poowong-Loch-Nyora sewerage scheme would happen was greatly appreciated.

From what I understand from speaking with long time residents, the need to provide a sewerage system for these towns was recognised some 40 years ago. Meetings have been held, plans drawn up, studies carried out and valuable briefing sessions conducted by the South Gippsland Water Authority but there is still no sign of any commencement of construction on the project. Sadly, with each successive briefing, the completion date of the project (in 2005 we were told we would be sewered by now) keeps moving steadily into the future. From conversations with residents and businesses and attending of meetings there is increasing frustration and concern and a rising sense of pessimism that nothing is going to happen and that this long anticipated scheme will be discontinued.

The uncertainty is having an effect on the area. As a Poowong resident, it is quite clear that the delays have impacted upon the development of the town. As I understand it, a new housing estate that will bring more people to add to the vibrant life of our growing community has been placed on hold by the developer until there is certainty about when the scheme will commence. The same view is being taken by people who would like to make their homes in Poowong but are reluctant to do so until they know when sewerage will be connected.

From what I have read and heard in conversation there is particular concern on the question of public health in the growing community of Nyora where septic tank overflows are creating problems and similar concerns being expressed about this happening Loch and Poowong to the detriment of their reputation as pleasant places to reside.

There is absolutely no doubt that the communities of the three towns have been fully supportive of the sewerage scheme for years and have watched, with anticipation, the Meeniyan scheme move through to successful completion. People cannot wait to see their scheme practically underway.

The support of Essential Services Commission in expediting this Meeniyan experience in the Poowong-Loch-Nyora communities would be greatly appreciated.

Jim Foley