

post-flood discussion with SGB community members west of Capricornia Canal,
on 2 May 2022 (* indicates name and contacts withheld)

1. overland flow from catchment to the west (Palmer Avenue):

This sub-catchment of Marshals Creek should be investigated to determine capacities of its sub-surface and overland drainage networks, especially in the downstream area (South Golden Beach). That investigation should lead to upgrades in the piped network, to identification of overland flow-paths and to their upgrade.

Residents report that a large diameter pipe brings stormwater from the west to Shara Boulevard. Water surcharges then flows overland down inadequate routes like the one on the western boundary of 27 Phillip Street (a resident*¹ has video of the event on 28 February). This open space which it appears should bring overland flow from Shara Boulevard to Phillip Street is not fit for purpose. For example, it has steep cross-fall towards #27, which thus carries the bulk of that water through to Phillip Street.

2. backyard easements:

There are several "easements" running from west to east and occupying the rear 1.5m of each allotment. The combined 3m width is named as three pairs of Easements 1&2, 3&4, 5&6. Their layout is shown in an AWC report "South Golden Beach Environmental Assessment" of 2015. I recall it deals with this and other drainage issues in South Golden Beach on both sides of Capricornia Canal.

I think the AWC report led to the 12-year drainage program that Michael alluded to at the OSCA meeting on Tuesday 26 April. My understanding is that Council offered under that program to clear these drains and fence them (with paling fences). Many properties took up the offer but clearing and fencing was prevented in some locations by private works like garden sheds over the easements.

For example, work on the backyard easement drain north of Clifford Street was started in 2018 but not completed because of a shed at the rear of one property*². The rest of the drain was thus never cleared, defeating the connectivity sought by the program.

It would have been wiser not to conflate drainage and flooding, as happened at the meeting on 26 April. Works on these drains will not help in relation to floods of the size experienced on 28 February.

Notwithstanding that, the backyard easement project should be revitalised and completed. Community are willing and may thus be up to explaining the value of the project to landholders with encroachments.

3. flap gates:

At the eastern end of each east-west backyard easement is a flap gate. There is a fourth gate just north.

Conditions of these mechanisms vary and maintenance is needed, plus a guarantee of future maintenance. The group requests and I support routine annual inspection and maintenance just prior to each wet season. Perhaps SES could encourage the nearest able-bodied neighbour to be 'warden' for each gate. The warden would either clear the gate or report it up for clearing.

Many of the flap gates didn't work correctly for the recent flood. Some don't seal shut. Some don't open when they should. This should be corrected now, as further flooding is still feasible this wet season.

One flap gate had its perished rubber seal removed three years ago. The seal should be replaced asap. This could be flap gate #2, with numbering from south to north. It is located near #19 Elizabeth Street.

Flap gate #4 has mud blocking it from opening. The mud has settled over the years on the apron of the flap gate and mangrove growth is moving in. Enough mud was dug out recently for the gate to close but the full apron should be cleared to create storage capacity for future mud before it again blocks the flap.

4. flood pump:

Residents west of Capricornia Canal are aware of the flood pump serving the area east of the Canal. They think such a pump would benefit their system as well. One difference on the east side is that a larger drain collects stormwater and brings it in volume to the central pump. This function could be introduced under Elizabeth Street. Council land opposite Gloria Street, where a flood lifter pump could be stationed.

Costs and benefits of this concept should be investigated, and the findings shared.

5. collapsed stormwater inlet:

There are grated pits in the road reserve between the two sealed formations of Shara Boulevard, near Palmer Avenue. There are also the older style concrete roofed pits. One of these has had its roof pushed off the stanchions and is thus sealed. **This needs repair. Better would be replacement with a grated inlet.**

6. sewage pump failure:

The SPS pump near #13 Elizabeth Street has failed so many times that residents no longer even report it. When it fails, smell pervades the area. I am also told that “people’s toilets stop working during heavy rain and sewage caps pop off in backyards”. **This needs attention and nearby residents need to know they are being heard.**

7. stagnant water long term:

The corner of Elizabeth and Clifford Streets must be a sag-point for stormwater. Nearby residents*³ report that water sits in the table drain above grate level for weeks at a time after significant rain.

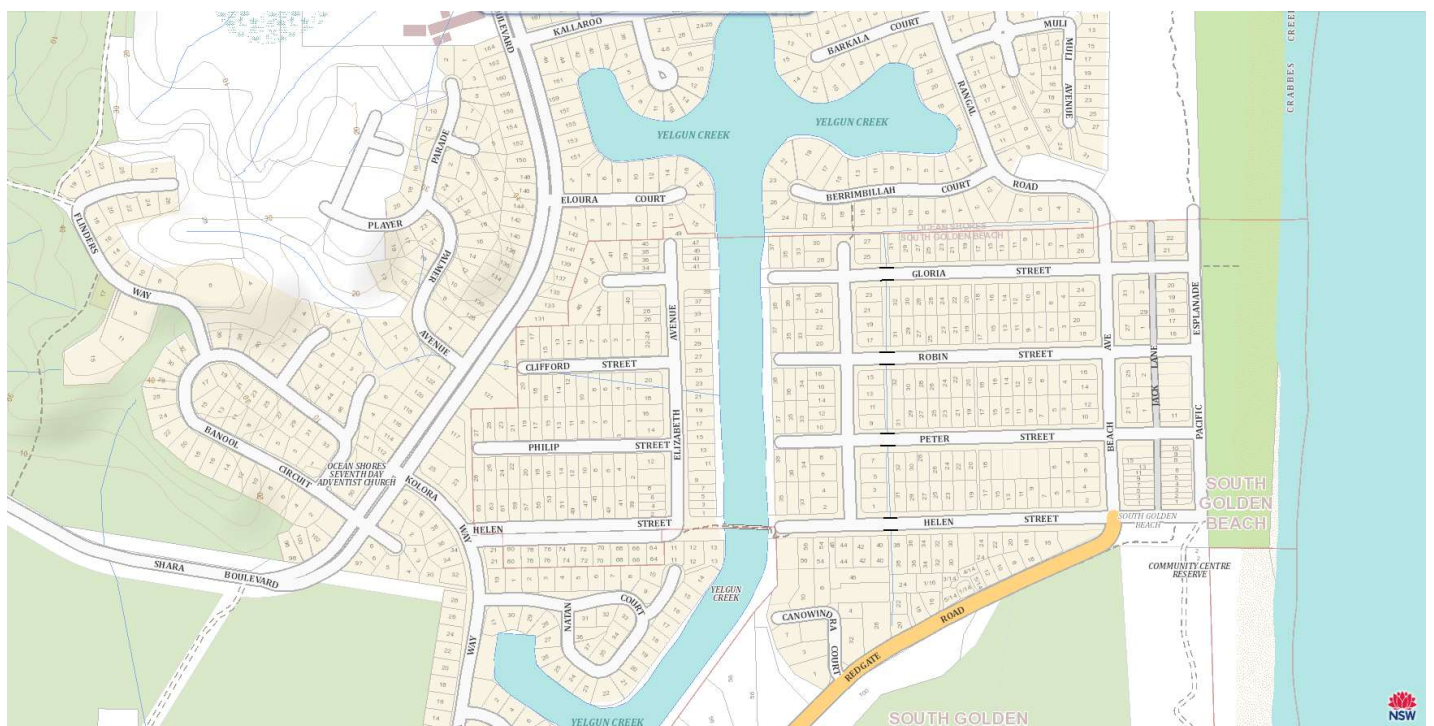
Would staff please talk to them (contacts through me) and design and then build a remedy? This may require piping north or south down Elizabeth Street, to one of the backyard easements.

8. streets as overland flowpaths for stormwater:

The extract below from SixMaps still shows the blue line of the creek over which Clifford Street was placed. Development is at its worst when no arrangements are made for an overland flow path where one is clearly needed (see also my point 1 above about Phillip Street). This legacy defect now needs to be recognised and made good. Investigation is needed, and far deeper than the 2015 “Environmental Assessment”.

9. two area-wide issues:

Could Council and community please have a briefing that scopes what could be done here? There are two major issues to deal with: drainage from the west (Palmer Avenue) and backwater from Marshals Creek.



extract from SixMaps