Aaron Brown

Independent Planning Commission

RE: West Culburra Beach Development,

I am writing to ask that the commission take into consideration some information specific to the Culburra Beach local community before refusing the proposed West Culburra Beach development. Myself and my Husband run the local allied health business in Culburra Beach (Coast Allied Health). We have been in operation for nearly six years and have lived in Culburra Beach since 2013. As health professionals we get the unique opportunity to engage with a wide range of residents covering all age groups. We are also in a unique position that we often hear about the lives of many of our customers and what is bothering them.

Personally our business is not reliant on the West Culburra expansion whilst we would welcome the potential growth in profits that may occur with additional residents. It is the growth in services we could offer and how we could better serve the community that excites us the most about the potential growth in population. We pride ourselves on a “people before profits” approach to healthcare. Additional residents would allow us to expand our services to include arthritis management exercise classes, falls prevention courses, Medicare funded diabetes group services, Lungs in Action group class and a range of other services that we do not quite have the numbers for currently. More patients would also allow us to recruit additional clinical staff that have different areas of expertise to our own - again benefiting current and new residents. We are proud employers of Shoalhaven locals - an expansion of our services would allow us to provide additional local jobs. We are fully aware the Shoalhaven LGA and Culburra Beach have a large representation in older age brackets and we are set up to embrace that demographic trend should it continue in West Culburra.

That the West Culburra Development includes commercial zoning is appealing to us. We are currently operating in premises that are too small – we cannot purpose build because we have been unable to acquire a property with the appropriate zoning. We’d love to be able to see our clients in a purpose- built clinic - with excellent disabled access, unfortunately we currently cannot deliver those premises due to being unable to obtain appropriately zoned land.

As health professionals we have a rare insight into the opinions and lives of many members of our community.

There are certainly environmentally conscious residents who are concerned about the impact on Lake Wolloumbulla. Generally, their concerns regarding the Long Bow golf course far outweigh their concerns about the West Culburra Beach Development. The majority of the West Culburra development is outside the Wolloumbulla Catchment.

Local businesses are very much in support of the development and many of them are perhaps even reliant on the development going ahead. Culburra has lots of great services that are here ready to serve additional residents including: Supermarket, petrol stations, bowling Club, community hall facilities, retail, cafes and hair and beauty services.

Culburra Beach primary school could easily accommodate more students as it suffered a significant loss of student when nearby Callala Bay public school opened. There are several qualified teachers living in Culburra Beach who are affected by the arrival and departure of defense families. Current one or two defense families leaving the area can result in the loss of a “class” and thus a classroom teacher. Additional families in Culburra Beach would mean more students at the school and more teachers employed. As a parent I would love if the local school was big enough to allow on average one class per year group from Kindy to year 6, rather than several different composite classes which in recent years have covered up to 3 year groups in one class or are cross stage composites which are particularly difficult from a lesson planning perspective.

Unlike many small towns, Culburra is a friendly community and inclusive of those who have recently moved to the area. We have lots to offer residents including a strong arts culture (Culburra Beach Festival is evidence of this), surfing culture (our board riders club is one of the most successful in the country), and sporting clubs. Our local clubs would welcome new members, and this would allow new residents to feel part of the community. The Jnr and Ladies Football teams would particularly benefit as in some age and gender groups there are nearly but not quite enough interested players to register a team in the local competition.

Local Oyster farmers already suffer significant impacts and restrictions on sales during heavy rain. The run off from local agriculture areas into the Crookhaven is already affecting oyster farms I hope the commission has considered carefully if the development will place significantly more restrictions on aquaculture or if run off from the development would mostly be an impact at times of heavy rainfall where restrictions are already commonplace.

Thank you for taking this comment into consideration. I have the upmost respect for decisions made by independent parties. I am not an expert in environment issues and expect that appropriate environmental experts have been engaged. I hope that this letter has helped the assessors gain an insight into some of the potential benefits the development would have for the Culburra Beach community and allow that to be weighted up against negative environmental impacts.