

**Speech for public meeting re West Culburra Development**

**My name is John Castellan I reside at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with my wife.**

**My family and I have been coming to Culburra Beach for the past 45 years and have been permanent residents for the past 15 years.**

**Unlike the many visitors who signed in to attend this meeting, the majority of the people here today are residents who have a vested interest in this development.**

**The 2003 Commission of Inquiry headed by Andrew Refshague saw overwhelming support from the local and aboriginal communities for this development.**

That Commission recommended limited development in West Culburra but sadly that is as far as it went...it apparently died in the Department or in the Minister's Office.

Since then we have had public meetings after public meetings which had overwhelming support but hurdle after hurdle was put in the way...and here we are again with little prospect of getting this development approved...fifteen years of utter frustration for our residents.

The majority of residents of this village want to see it prosper and not die though lack of development.

Approval would see young families with children flock to the area.

**Approval would bring development and with it much needed jobs for a region that has one of the highest [IF NOT THE HIGHEST] unemployment rate in the State.**

**Part of the development proposal is for over 55 living, This would provide many of our retirees with the opportunity to downsize.**

**Downsizing would enable them to live in their own home for much longer and be less of a burden on the limited government resources that go towards aged care.**

**We need growth in this village.**

**Businesses are struggling, the hardware store is closing at the end of July and it is most likely**

that Wollworths will soon follow if the development does not go ahead.

A refusal will be the death knell for our village.

Many of our residents are elderly and have restricted licenses that limit them to drive no more than 15km each way. The Nowra shopping centre is 25km away.

They would have no means of travelling to Nowra to do their shopping other than on a very poor bus service that operates twice a day.

Travelling to Nowra would see more traffic on our badly maintained roads and would impose additional cost for the rest of the villagers.

**Lake Wollumboola, the Crookhaven and Shoalhaven Rivers and Curleys Bay have all survived the many years of rural and residential development without any adverse effects.**

**The fishing and oyster industries have all prospered. The lake still provides prawns for commercial fishermen, local residents and the many visitors who come here during the summer months.**

**What this is telling anyone who will listen is that we are conservationists at heart and we look after and respect our waterways.**

**We do not vandalise our environment**

We are being held to ransom by a small but well organised and very vocal minority who claim to represent the whole community and have had the ear of the Department of Planning and the Minister for the past 15 years.

They only represent a very small percentage of local residents as evidenced by the numbers here today.

The developers appear to have done all that has been asked of them and then some.

Yet, here we are again at another public meeting knowing full well that the Department has recommended that the development be refused.

Thank you for listening.