

Karyn Knowles

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25th July 2018

Independent Planning Commission NSW

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To Commission Members,

Objection to West Culburra Concept Proposal (SSD 3846)

1. **I recommend that the Independent Planning Commission refuse the West Culburra Concept Proposal (SSD 3846).**
2. I have lived in [REDACTED] permanently since January 1973 as a resident, parent, teacher, business owner (retired) and now as a community volunteer across environmental, educational, humanitarian and creative interests. I have written letters similar to this over what seems to be many years in relation to urban development issues especially related to the preservation & conservation of the catchment of and correspondingly the entity, Lake Wollumboola.
3. My concern has always been and continues to be about irretrievable and unwarranted damage that human pressures & demands, in the form of intensive urban development in the catchment of the lake can cause. The lake is a scientifically documented fragile ecosystem. Knowledge about its dynamics (high and low water levels, openings and closings, droughts and wet) has been consistently recorded for decades. Measured scientific research, documentation and a precautionary wisdom from experts in flora, fauna, geology and coastal geomorphology chorus that preservation of these diverse waterways are an integral part of sustainability for place and people. There is also the matter of respect for our First Peoples lands stewardship, represented locally by the Jerringa Mob
4. In the matter of the West Culburra Proposal the concern extends additionally to consideration about and the preservation of the health of the Shoalhaven Crookhaven Estuary. It is a multifaceted waterway for flora and fauna, first peoples, fishing & oyster farmers and recreational users. Lake Wollumboola's catchment is also impacted because of the creeks that enter the lake are part of the West Culburra site
5. Additionally the waterways of the Shoalhaven-Crookhaven Estuary and the lake are recognised as nationally and internationally significant wetland habitat for migratory birds under Australian and NSW Government legislation, that benchmark does not come easily and warrants respect and precautionary decision making.
6. From my understanding and information available NSW government departments including planning, do not see wisdom in the extent of the West Culburra DA. The density of housing plus an industrial area etc. almost suggests a proposal that constitutes another village/town with

ensuing infrastructural demands, lobbying, imports and exports. The City of Shoalhaven is loaded with dozens of existing isolated villages that demand services, maintained roads etc. Sustainable? The current village atmosphere of Culburra Beach and Orient Point is actually a strength for tourism and living choice. We need a variety of places in which to live.

7. Clearly commercial enterprise is undergoing change across many platforms throughout Australia. A new housing estate does not necessarily feed into a larger footprint for the CBD in Culburra Beach. I hear supporters plea that a DA such as this will contribute to new jobs and a revival of the village CBD. I suggest this is unrealistic in the extreme. The proximity of the West Culburra proposal to existing retail and business in Nowra seems a more realistic retail relationship.
8. I hear supporters refer to affordable housing. Indeed that is a newsworthy headline. However this DA in no way will necessarily meet that very human need. The timeframe for the proposal seems also unrelated to immediate needs of people calling for affordable housing.
9. I also hear supporters of the current DA claim that Culburra Beach is dying. Is it their suggestion is that a separate West Culburra Village would contribute to stimulating the ever changing CBD of Culburra Beach? The CBD of Culburra Beach has undergone evolution since the first urban development of the late 1940s. I would suggest that evidence also demonstrates that it is the nature of coastal towns to ebb and flow seasonally and also be subject to the influence of wider demographic and general economic influences in terms of economic viability in the context of a CBD. It's usually a take-away cafe, service station and Real Estate agents that endure.
10. Culburra Beach itself is actually alive and well naturally, culturally. And business wise for many. There is an evolving inclusiveness and diversity that celebrates our national and international reputation for bird watching on Lake Wollumboola , education about and appreciation of the iconic features of this ICOLL, that is Lake Wollumboola; a continuing appreciation of great natural beauty including diverse waterways, proximity to Beecroft Peninsula and Jervis Bay; a keen fishing & surfing fraternity, proximity to some of the best oyster growing waters of the south coast, a developing First Peoples Jerringa Mob of Rosebery Park, Orient Point, lively sporting clubs, an annual Love Culburra Beach Festival (2011-2018), some iconic cottage architecture of the 1950s, international surfers, book clubs, many artists, musicians and craftspeople. There is an Ambulance Station and Recreation Park including a great Skate Park There is great energy in the town including a community garden. There is what appears to be a profitable Woollies and accompanying BWS outlet. We have a successful Industrial Zone and quite a list of tradies. I believe a second vet is due to set up shop. All our business and commercial needs do not have to be met in Culburra Beach.
11. I hear suggestions that water quality can be improved with development! That seems impossible and apparently is not demonstrable. Surely the lessons of urban development history deny that. Inputs and exports move around and the balance changes and sometimes tips unfavourably. That lesson has been seen and regretted across this ancient landscape that we have the privilege to spend time in.
12. I read and hear about with interest of the Halloran Trust Planning Proposal and suggest it is the way forward to balance development + conservation going forward. We do not get back our natural places once they are gone. Wise development that respects first peoples history and

culture and fragile and valued ecosystems should be the benchmark. People bring pressure and that can be incremental. That needs to be managed carefully and wisely.

13. I understand there is Halloran Trust land closer to the Culburra Beach township on which medium density housing could be successfully built and this could complement our existing village boundaries. Perhaps that could actually be developed as "affordable housing"

I therefore respectfully recommend the refusal of this current west Culburra DA. Perhaps there will be other parts within the Halloran Trust Planning Proposal that will have more suitable locations for urban development.

Yours faithfully

Karyn Knowles