



## Central Coast Community Environment Network Inc.

*An alliance of community and environment groups from Lake Macquarie, Wyong and Gosford.*

5th May 2005

### INQUIRY INTO COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

NSW Standing Committee on Public Works

Legislative Council Parliament House

Sydney 2000

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Dear Sir/Madam

The Community Environment Network Inc. (CEN) is a not for profit, non-government community group that is active in the Gosford, Wyong and Lake Macquarie region for ***Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD)***. We have over 300 members including nearly 70 groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Coastal Infrastructure.

### **Inevitable Pressures of Growth on the Central Coast Region of NSW**

The principles of ESD should underpin the any coastal growth strategy. Development should be in accord with the understanding that the relationship between the economy, our society and the ecology of our natural systems upon which we depend for long term survival. It should be within the parameters of ESD, that is, **that the economy serves human society and both operate within the capacities of the natural world's ecological systems.**

The population of the Central Coast is growing at roughly twice the Sydney Metropolitan rate and unless this is managed by encouraging population shifts to a diversity of existing areas **away** from the Coast then any strategies proposed based on sustainable coastal growth will be overtaken.

#### **Basic Infrastructure**

- Water supply

An urban water strategy should be based on demand management, water tanks, water reuse, utilisation of existing infrastructure and optimising wise use where water is extracted

Protection of drinking water catchments – no further development west of the freeway in water catchments and no expansion of extractive industries or development in the Somersby plateau.

A sustainable strategy should prohibit any development that may negatively impact on water quality and yield in the drinking water catchments. This includes extractive industries on the Somersby Plateau.

Environmental flows need to be defined and implemented on all streams.

- **Housing**

Support medium – high density in consultation with the local community aspirations. Our view is that development should not exceed a “human scale”. In this regard the planning of the Gosford town centre and Warnervale area should be based on ESD Principles.

- **Sustainable Transport**

A desired outcome should be an integrated and equitable transport system. Accessibility rather than mobility should be the ultimate target.

Key issues include:

- Links between regional areas (eg. Newcastle, Central Coast and Sydney)
- Transport links between regions should reduce heavy vehicle movements on roads and promote the use of rail and other non-road based bulk transport.
- Imbalance between investment in roads and public transport.
- Within the region implement the proposed rail shuttle service between Woy Woy and Warnervale
- A more frequent local rail service between Central Coast stations to reduce car dependence and a light rail network between major population Centres and the heavy rail system.
- Heavy trucks off the road, particularly B Doubles.
- Provide equity to Central Coast residents with a Government public bus service.
- The use of more cost-efficient public transport e.g. mini buses
- subsidising youth, low income and pensioner fares on private transport systems in keeping with concessions on government services.
- Incorporation of safe and ecologically acceptable cycleways and walkways into new and existing developments and urban Centres.

- **Resource Efficiency and Recycling**

Recycling has been given a boost by recent NSW Government and Waste Board initiatives. We are heading in the right direction, however, until full life cycle costing is introduced allowing the full costing of waste disposal to be factored into the cost of production waste reduction initiatives will fail to achieve the best possible outcome. We note that life cycle costing is in accordance with the IGAE (the Inter Governmental Agreement on the Environment). It is considered that under the IGAE government has the responsibility to implement full life cycle costing.

More incentives for energy efficient building design are required.

- **Environmental and Public Works Improvements**

On the environmental and public works improvements front there has been a paucity of projects to match residential growth (e.g. lakes restoration needs, public transport, town centre investment, etc).

- **Telecommunication Towers**

There is becoming an overabundance of phone towers required by the telecommunication companies and these towers are being proposed for residential areas. As there are known health risks to persons living around the towers we would like to see that the government allocates safe areas for these towers and that the telecommunication providers share the towers, rather than spoil the landscape with many of these facilities.

## **Social/community services**

- **Community Services**

Community Services whether for the aged or the youth should centre on the Central Coast villages, incorporating sports and cultural facilities. Larger Regional facilities should be centred on transport

nodes. There is inadequate provision of community facilities for the current population, let alone for future population. These community facilities should be in place at the same time as new urban development.

- Education

A better-educated Central Coast will assist it to successfully deal with the full range of economic, social and ecological issues it faces. A more skilled workforce will be more attractive for firms wishing to relocate to the Central Coast. Improved research, educational and training facilities appropriately located could become a particular service that the Central Coast could offer, and benefit from.

## **Economic**

- Economic and Employment

We support initiatives that lead to industrial development centring on clean, environmentally sustainable industries utilising local labour, ideas and where possible local capital. The Central Coast suffers from the lack of a regional financial system that facilitates the investment of local money locally. We support initiatives that will encourage local business and environmentally sustainable industries that have already invested in the Central Coast to expand and employ more local people. We also support initiatives that lead to the development and attraction to the region of business and environmentally sustainable industry, which will employ local people already living in the area. With ever-developing advances in information technology the need for businesses to be located in Sydney is decreasing. Similarly, the opportunities to promote relocation to the Central Coast, and the need to have requisite planning in place to facilitate this, are increasing.

We support the revitalisation of ecologically sustainable agriculture and related activities on the Central Coast and initiatives such as a fresh produce market for the Central Coast from which the region and other parts of Australia and overseas could be supplied.

## **Environmental**

The natural environment, its condition and care is the highest priority for our organisation.

- Coastal Zone Mapping

The Central Coast region has unacceptable development pressures, which have culminated in unacceptable developments and settlement patterns. Some of this is due to the removal of this region from SEPP 71 Coastal Policy. Over the past few years new coastal zone mapping has been undertaken to once again include the region, however, long delays over the gazettal of this mapping has culminated in even more unacceptable coastal development being approved. We yet again urge the fast tracking of this mapping and the inclusion of the Central Coast in SEPP 71.

- Green / Wildlife Corridors

It is important in order to maintain and build a regional identity for the Central Coast that buffer zones (in particular between the Hunter and CC regions) are augmented. In the case of wildlife corridors within the region, in this regard, the Wyong Conservation Strategy, the proposed Hunter Corridor (from Stockton to the Watagans), the Coastal Open Space System (COSS) and the proposed Western COSS need to be implemented as a matter of urgency within this strategy or they will be lost forever.

Green buffer zones have been accepted by planners for more than half a century as a fundamental method of encouraging distinct regional identities and we endorse the creation of an Inter-City Environmental Zone between the Central Coast and the Lower Hunter.

This Environmental Zone was widely discussed in the 1970s and incorporated as a strategic objective in the 1982 Hunter Region Environment Plan No 1. The area known as the Wallarah Peninsula, south of Swansea between Lake Macquarie and the Pacific Ocean, was identified as the coastal cornerstone of the Zone, which was envisaged as stretching from the sea to the Watagan Mountains.

The area has been covered by a coal lease (mining ceased in 2002) which currently is being rehabilitated. The area lies on either side of the boundary between Lake Macquarie City and Wyong Shire. Both councils have zoned within the relevant area for various forms of conservation protection.

- Coastal Dunes

The Coastal dunes are important to the integrity of the Coastal areas. Rehabilitation of these dune areas should be continued and expanded. Similarly, the Central Coast's wetland areas are essential components in the region's ecology in terms of provision of habitat and filtering of water. They should be fully protected, and where required, rehabilitated.

The creeks, rivers, estuaries, coastal lagoons and lakes of the Central Coast must be carefully managed to prevent further degradation. There needs to be ecologically responsible stormwater management in line with best practice and the principles of ESD. It should ensure that further development is within the limits of the region's ecosystems' abilities to cope with such development.

### Governance

Revisions of Local Environment Plans (LEP) for each Local Government Area (LGA) are needed to co-ordinate policies and planning strategies between all levels of government.

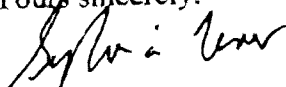
The preparation of LEPs – need to be an open and public process with clearly stated objectives, and Not compromise environmental targets.

Key issues for the community are:

- Transparent and independent decision making that recognises the dependence of the economy on society, and of both the economy and society on the environment.
- A strategy for continuing community awareness raising, acceptance and involvement.
- The development of a set of indicators and the development of feedback loops to allow the monitoring and adjustment of strategies where necessary.
- A commitment by the three levels of government to the implementation and funding of those planning strategies which have had extensive community consultation and the acceptance of the general public.

Before, during and after any planning process there is the need to be able to reflect and see that decisions are being taken in the best interest of levels of the community rather than powerful vested interests of particular players in the system.

Yours sincerely,



Sylvia Turner.  
Executive Member.  
CEN Inc.