

Proforma F – Manyana Matters - 14 responses

Dear Committee,

Manyana Matters Environmental Association (MMEA) Inc. is a volunteer community based organisation, initially formed in 2018 and incorporated in 2020 in response to environmental threats following the 2019/20 Black Summer bushfires.

Impact on environment of proposed and approved developments

The NSW Scientific Committee established the Threatened Species Conservation Act in 2000-2003, decades before the 2019/20 Black Summer Fires. The committee made a final determination that the clearing of native vegetation is a major contributing factor in the loss of biological diversity and extinction of native flora and fauna.

Outdated (“Zombie”) development approvals and zoning decisions such as those proposed for our villages and other areas will result in extensive clearing of native vegetation with very high biodiversity values and will have significant impacts on threatened species and endangered ecological communities listed under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act and the Federal EPBC Act. These DA approvals and zoning decisions were made when extreme climatic events including flooding and catastrophic bushfires were far less frequent than they are today. Ongoing climate change means that this frequency will increase.

The NSW planning system and legislation must be adapted to account for how climate change is leading to species extinction and biodiversity loss. DAs and zoning decisions that are decades old and that exacerbate the effects of climate change must not be allowed to proceed. The planning system must be allowed to account for the cumulative effects of developments on coastal ecosystems.

Impact on communities of inappropriate developments

Housing subdivision proposals in coastal zones are predominantly for holiday or second homes. For example, on 2016 Census night, over 60% of homes in the Manyana area were unoccupied. With climate change leading to rising bushfire risks, increasing the population of small coastal villages that have single access roads is not a safe or responsible solution to NSW’s housing crisis.

Additional residential and affordable housing should be planned in and around the rural towns and cities that already have appropriate infrastructure in place, i.e., education, public transport, health, social and emergency services, retail etc. This is where new infrastructure can be most efficiently built and would enhance opportunities for growth in regional populations. Investment in infrastructure for coastal villages should prioritise resilience, e.g., communications, water and energy supply.

Recommendations re Outdated (“Zombie”) development approvals

1. Place an immediate moratorium on developments in bushfire affected areas approved before the 2019 /20 Black Summer bushfires.
2. Require development consents approved before the 2019 /20 Black Summer bushfires which have not been substantially commenced be reassessed under current environmental and planning legislation.

3. Impose a statutory lapsing provision for development consents more than 5 years old that have not been substantially commenced. Enable the holder of the consent to seek a new approval within 2 years.
4. Amend planning law to ensure that any compensation that may be payable by the lapsing of a development consent is capped to unimproved land value and defined to be zero for any development consent more than 10 years old with the statutory presumption that the holder of consent had no intention of acting on the consent.

Yours sincerely,