

Document tendered by Mr Peter Gillis	Inquiry into the Planning System and the Impacts of Climate Change on the Environment and Communities - Woy Woy Peninsula Submission of Evidence Peter Gillis 10 April 2024 Woy Woy Peninsula Residents Association [PRA] Incorporated INC2101073
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The PRA submission outlined 4 areas of impact of Climate Change on our environment and community :

- Local Heat Island Effects
- Coastal Erosion
- Local Flooding
- Endangered Wildlife Species

Woy Woy Peninsula sandplain houses 36,000 people in an area of 14.5 square kilometres, the highest population density on the Central Coast.

The sandplain averages 5 metres above sea level, and has been made vulnerable to these impacts by overdevelopment.

Local heat island effects are well documented as a threat to life for the elderly, the sick, and children under 5. The Peninsula has a tree canopy of only 10%, and some areas have only one canopy tree per hectare. Ettalong Beach and Booker Bay are examples of this, and the result is a heat island effect of +5°C in the summer months caused by overdevelopment, lack of tree planting, and negligible tree retention.

Coastal Erosion is evident everywhere. Umina Beach and Ocean Beach have a history of erosion of dunes, and loss of trees from high seas and tides. Beach erosion has come within metres of roadways, and swells and tides have eroded the north end of the bay at Ettalong Beach, threatening houses. There are no tangible plans in place to mitigate these effects. Council recently approved a five storey foreshore development within 19 metres of the erosion at Ettalong Beach.

Local Flooding from high tides now endangers properties in the north-west, and frequently invades the parks in that area. High rainfall causes flooding of creeks in the south and west, and threatens homes (e.g. last weekend). Some areas are only 3 metres above sea level, and local flooding will only worsen with further extreme weather events.

Endangered wildlife species are well documented for this area, which is characterised by the Umina Coastal Sandplain Woodland [UCSW]. What was once an extensive corridor of woodland is now just several areas, each of only a few hectares. The flora and fauna have been under threat of extinction for over 20 years, due to land development and management issues, which continue to this day.

Overall, the Peninsula is a sad tale of over-development due to disregard of existing planning rules, lack of stricter planning laws, and neglect by local and state governments.

Our most pressing need is for extensive tree planting programs, and local development planning rules which mandate planting of shade trees and retention of existing trees. The required 40% tree canopy will cost tens of millions, require a change of attitudes, and take many years. But the benefit to the community is a matter of life or death.

The way forward for our community, will be to strictly limit and control further development to help maintain our lifestyle, and protect what is a very unique and under-valued environment in the Sydney Basin Bioregion.

References – submission of Woy Woy Peninsula Residents Association Inc [PRA]

The Woy Woy Peninsula covers the suburbs of Woy Woy and its bays, Blackwall, Ettalong Beach, Bookers Bay, Umina Beach, Pearl Beach and Patonga. The bays, Pearl Beach, and Patonga are not located on the 14.5 sq kilometre sand plain. The plain is surrounded by Broken Bay to the east, Brisbane Water to the north-east and north-west, Mount Ettalong and other mountains on the southern and western sides. Each of these surrounding areas are very environmentally sensitive.

List of reports and studies

Adapt NSW. *Climate Change in the Central Coast*. NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. Accessed at <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au>

Adapt NSW. *Coastal Erosion in NSW Statewide Exposure Assessment*. 2017 State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage. Accessed at <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/impacts-climate-change/natural-environment/coasts>

LGNSW *Woy Woy Peninsula Climate Change Adaptation Study, July 2021*. Local Government NSW. Accessed at [https://lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Environment/Climate%20Change%20case%20studies/Woy Woy Peninsula Climate Change Adaptation Study Central Coast Council.pdf](https://lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Environment/Climate%20Change%20case%20studies/Woy%20Woy%20Peninsula%20Climate%20Change%20Adaptation%20Study%20Central%20Coast%20Council.pdf)

Central Coast Council. *Greener Places Strategy: 2021-2031*. Central Coast Council. Accessed at <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/strategy/greener-places-strategy>

Central Coast Council. *Green Grid: Our Place*. Central Coast Council. Accessed at <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/strategy/central-coast-green-grid-our-place>

Central Coast Council. *Woy Woy Floodplain Risk Management Study. Final Report. December 2022*. Accessed at [https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/202308/d15682708_woywoyfrms_final2.1_main volume_r1_adopted.pdf](https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/202308/d15682708_woywoyfrms_final2.1_main_volume_r1_adopted.pdf)

NSW DPEI. *Central Coast Regional Plan 2041*. NSW Department of Planning and Environment. October 2022. Accessed at <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/plans-for-your-area/regional-plans/central-coast/central-coast-regional-plan-2041>

Umina Coastal Sandplain Woodland endangered species. Accessed at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2000-2003/umina-coastal-sandplain-woodland-endangered-ecological-community-list>

Tree canopy densities and figures

Urban Forests in NSW & ACT report, Centre for Urban Research (RMIT) & Greener Spaces Better Places.

Central Coast Greener Places Strategy, Part 1, page 7, States the Woy Woy Peninsula has a tree canopy of less than 10%. This is less than half the tree canopy of Sydney City, which is 20.7% and well below the recommended figure of 40%.

Strategic Planning Review of Planning Controls

Central Coast Local Planning Panel, in December 2022, recommended a strategic planning review of planning controls, development provisions and character statements for Umina, Woy Woy and Ettalong Beach. Central Coast Council has yet to respond.

Woy Woy Peninsula Aerial View



NOTE : The Peninsula sandplain is completely occupied by urban development, with the exception of Blackwall Mountain, centre-right.

Aerial View of Ettalong Beach and Booker Bay



NOTE : The proliferation of long tiled roofs in 'gun barrel' developments, the huge extent of hard surfaces, and absence of shade trees. The area to the right of the north-south main road is just over 62 hectares, and you can count around 60 significant shade trees. The absence of tree canopy causes a heat island effect of +5 degrees in summer.