

Portfolio Committee No.  
7 - Planning and  
Environment  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000



6 Henderson Close  
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450  
26 June 2024

## **Additional Information - Planning system and the impacts of climate change on the environment and communities**

Thank you for allowing us to give evidence before Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment on Monday 17 June 2024 for the inquiry into the planning system and the impacts of climate change on the environment and communities.

While our objections to the State Government’s revitalisation plans for the Jetty Foreshores on environmental grounds have been made clear in our submission, there are other factors that are a cause of concern.

### **ACCESS**

The major concern that is evident with this plan is the poor access to the Jetty Foreshore area. At the moment there are only two access points, both of which are unsuitable given there will be another 800 – 1000 people proposed to be residing in the Foreshores, either as residents or tourists. The main access point is a level crossing over the railway line, and the secondary access is via a residential street and a narrow bridge over the railway line.



There are roughly a dozen trains that come through Coffs Harbour on a daily basis, which results in the rail crossing being closed each time. Additionally, for approximately 3 months in summer, the Great Southern Train visits Coffs Harbour twice a week on the way through to Brisbane and return. Each time it stops at the station, the crossing can be closed for 15-20 minutes, which causes a large build-up of traffic at the crossing. Many people at this time, choose to use the residential street to exit the Foreshores, which causes problems for the residents being able to leave their homes. This situation is exacerbated on a Sunday, when the Harbourside Markets are on.

In 2020, the City of Coffs Harbour produced a Coffs Jetty Strip Structure plan. The following assessment of traffic in and around the Jetty Foreshores by King and Campbell Pty Ltd stated:

**“Careful consideration needs to be given to the impacts of increased traffic generation on the broader traffic circulation network, including Harbour Drive and Orlando Street. Whilst the assessment of these broad traffic impacts is largely beyond the scope of this study, the following is noted:**

1. Harbour Drive and Orlando Street currently carry in excess of 10,000 vehicles per day.
2. Future development in the Coffs Jetty and Marina Precinct has the potential to significantly increase traffic volumes in Marina Drive, Harbour Drive and Orlando Street.
3. The potential for vehicles to find alternative routes around the Jetty Strip into the future via the local road network is limited, in large part owing to unsuitable road grades (particularly in the case of Edinburgh and Hood Streets) and disruption to existing residential amenity.

It is for the above reasons that it is strongly recommended that an alternative traffic route into the Coffs Jetty and Marina Precinct be identified, and any future development in the Precinct be contingent on its implementation – It is understood that an alternative route via Hogbin Drive, Howard Street and a bridge over the North Coast Rail line is currently being considered by Council and State Government. This initiative is supported.”

The plan of building an alternate traffic route (Howard St) as suggested above has been put on the backburner due to the large cost involved. I imagine there would also have been environmental concerns. A local retired engineer has advised that the director of PDNSW has stated publicly that they will not be funding alternate access because “it would be far too expensive and there wouldn’t be any money left for anything else”.

The City of Coffs Harbour also did a traffic count in August 2023. The seven day average of car entering the Foreshores area was approximately 9300 per day. The peak on a Sunday was 1471 per hour.

## **2) PARKING**

Despite the State Government stating that they will be providing increased parking as part of the Jetty Revitalisation Plan, their actual parking before and after plans have shown that there will, in actual fact, be considerably less parking if these plans come to fruition. Not only will there be less parking, the parking that exists will have bigger strains placed on it with the introduction of residential and tourist accommodation, as well as commercial enterprises including cafes, bars and restaurants. I imagine this would eventually lead to paid parking. This will have a huge impact on the community’s ability to enjoy the area.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

Some mention of this was made in the evidence. In accordance with the North Coast Regional Plan, Coffs Harbour was required to implement growth management strategies. One of these was to increase densities via infill development.

As a consequence of this, the City of Coffs Harbour has, via its Compact City Program, identified over 8000 opportunities for additional dwellings in the area bounded by the bypass currently under construction in the west to the ocean in the east. This figure may increase significantly, as there are areas under investigation at the interface with the bypass. The introduction of the 30-30-15 rules in 2023 will also allow increased heights and densities. The figure of 8000 also does not include other locations in the broader local government area.

So while these potential new dwelling opportunities have been identified, there has been no commensurate additional open space or recreational opportunities highlighted. People living in apartments with no backyards need to be able to access parklands. There is absolutely no sense in filling up what could be an extension to the already unique and beautiful area that is the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshores, with bricks and mortar.

The City of Coffs Harbour is best placed to identify opportunities for future residential growth. Public Servants in Sydney should not be dictating where residential and tourist accommodation should occur.

It is evident that allowing the State Government to continue with the Jetty Foreshores Revitalisation Plan is detrimental to the community's use of the Foreshores, now and in the future.

During our appearance before the inquiry on 17 June 2024, Sue Higginson noted "It sounds very bizarre that you have a current State Government that would appear to be working in the complete opposite direction of what the local council and what the mobilising local community would like to see for the Jetty Foreshore."

We have the same problem coming to terms with why the State Government is so determined to push ahead with this project, against the council's wishes. Prior to the 2023 State election NSW Labor made the promise to overturn this decision and retain the railway land as parkland for the community. They then reneged on the promise when they won the election. What

makes this plan so attractive to both the Coalition and the Labor Party that they are choosing to ignore the wishes of the City of Coffs Harbour? They are ignoring a council that has offered to buy the land for three times the value that PDNSW purchased it for from Transport for NSW. They are ignoring a Council that was so desperate to gain this land for the future of its citizens that they offered two prime blocks of real estate in the City Centre to the Government for affordable housing at no cost. The City of Coffs Harbour is now having to go down the path of Compulsory Acquisition.

It must be noted that at no time has any Minister from this Government or the previous Government engaged with the Coffs Harbour community or the Mayor in any meaningful dialogue. <https://www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/Newsroom/Media-Releases/Minister-dodges-Mayor-but-happy-to-front-media>.

We certainly don't understand what is going on. It should be so simple. We are not asking for much in the grand scheme of things. All we are asking for is a parcel of land that is only 4.2 h

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards

Helen Weir

Bruce Weir

Dr Sally Townley