

**Submission
No 154**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Save Central Coast Reserves

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Submission to the Inquiry into Crown Lands

By

Save Central Coast Reserves

Since September, 2015 when one Councillor went to the press about the Council's intended Land Sale Strategy, communities in the Gosford region have rallied to protect 25 urban reserves, parks and green spaces from Council's proposed reclassification and sell-off. Over the past 10 months the rapid creation of 8 community groups across the Gosford region has been a testament to their clear message that they do not consent to the council's plans to raise revenue by selling off public land. These are the sites targeted by the Council –

- 79A Kalakau Avenue, LOT 318 DP 225178, Forresters Beach
- 79B Kalakau Avenue, LOT 319 DP 225178 Forresters Beach (also known as Lots 318 and 319 Bluewave Crescent)
- 83 Brisbane Avenue, LOT 195 DP 9894 Umina Beach
- 85 Brisbane Avenue, LOT 196 DP 9894 Umina Beach
- 22A Delaware Road, LOT 22 DP 29443 Niagara Park
- 32A Dover Road, LOT 25 DP 26468 Wamberal (Corner of Dover & Lakeview Roads - Benjamin Parker Reserve)
- 1 Hely Street (Corner of Fielder and Hely), LOT 1 DP 17393 West Gosford
- 6 Isis Street, LOT 46 DP 231546 Wyoming
- 12 Jerribin Street, LOT 8 DP 246234 Wyoming
- 2 Kateena Avenue, LOT 192 DP 237499 Tascott
- 50 Wells Street, LOT 6 SEC 23 DP 56797 East Gosford
- 40A George Street, LOT 1 DP 996535 East Gosford
- Lots 184, 185, 186 and 187 DP 10186, 40, 42, 44 and 46 Pozieres Avenue Umina
- Lot 47 and 48 Sec B, DP 10242, 9–11 Mackenzie Avenue Woy Woy
- Lot 1 DP 247520 and Lot 372 DP 612274, 10 and 12 Jumbuck Close Woy Woy
- Lots 35 and 51 DP 26603, 37 and 39 Warren Avenue Avoca Beach (lookout)
- Perratt Close Reserve, R2217, DP 713715 Lot 59, 1B Perratt Close, Lisarow
- Eagle Close Reserve, 2 Eagle Close, Lisarow Lot 23 DP 605640
- 13 Winter Close (reserve), Lisarow Lot 20 DP 258815

- Reserve, corner of Coburg Street & Wells Street, East Gosford Lot 2 DP 1027281, Lot 18 DP 135256, Lot 17 DP 135256, Lot 16 DP 135256, Lot 14 DP 135256, Lot 12 DP135256, Lot 9 DP 135256, Lot 8 DP 135256.
- Yarram Road Playground Bensville (R2202) - 11 lots consisting of Lot 17-21 SEC E DP 6113 and Lot 68-73 SEC E DP 6113
- Lots 55 & 56 DP 9263, 40 and 42 Albion Street, Umina
- 93a Rivera Avenue, Terrigal Lot 32 DP 248806
- 36 and 38 James Sea Drive, Green Point Lot 402 DP 818160 and Lot 401 DP 818160
- Lot 27 DP 778345, 71 Alan Street, Niagara Park
- 83 Kincumber Street, Davistown Lot 17 Sec 2 DP 12702

Please note that initially the Wamberal Memorial Hall, its parking lot and children's playground was on the list. After several months of campaigning the Wamberal Community Group were informed by Council that it wasn't community land but operational land so it could be sold off without community input. However in July the group was advised by Council that it **is** community land and a decision has not been made whether to put it back on to the Land Sale Strategy list.

At no point has the Council formally advised or explained to the community how the sites were chosen for the Land Sale Strategy. The only information located stated that the sites were said to be 'identified as having sale potential; with no further use to Council; and having little community benefit' and in addition were 'no longer required for their initial use and had 'no foreseeable use for Council and the community going forward'. The Council has not provided the background or paperwork for these assumptions. They certainly didn't ask the communities involved for their input. Importantly Council staff did not look into the origins of these sites - were they bequeathed, a condition of development or were they Crown Land? At the Council's Public Meeting on July 6 staff, when asked if any of these blocks were Crown Land, an answer was not able to be given, in fact the council representative said there were many blocks under council management and they were unable to say if they were Crown Land or not.

It took approximately 8 months to finally get the Council to list the threatened sites on their website. Council refused to provide the Terms of Reference for the Council's Independent Consultant even when a GIPA form was completed. The Council did not formally advise communities of their intentions until June, 2016 when they placed a Notice of Public Hearing in the local paper. They shortly after changed it to a Notice of Public Meeting.

From September 2015 until the Council Amalgamation in early 2016 communities have sent dozens of emails and submissions to the Mayor, Councillors and CEO of Gosford Council requesting the protection of their urban reserves, parks and green spaces. When the Council Amalgamation occurred the community continued its argument for the protection of their sites and in the lead up and following the Central Coast Council's Public Meetings on July 6 the communities again sent dozens of emails and submissions requesting the protection of their Public Lands.

If communities had been included from the outset in a transparent and collaborative manner unnecessary distress would have been avoided and the significant cost to Council resources in staffing and consultants would have been reduced significantly.

The threatened public sites enjoy a wide variety of community uses and several have significant flora and fauna. Formal submissions have been provided by the community to Council outlining their sites' importance to the surrounding communities and/or the environment.

As an example here is an overview of some of the community sites:-

- East Gosford Reserve has been proven to be environmentally significant which has been highlighted in the Environmental Report provided to Councillors and the CEO in 2015. It is used by the local pre-school and home-school children for their environmental education. In addition the local community uses the reserve for active and passive recreation.
- Winter Close Reserve is the hub of the community for families living in the area and it was originally created as green space as a Gosford Council condition of development. This reserve is used daily and supports a strong bird habitat.
- Eagle Close Reserve has a substantial benefit for the environment and was again included as green space by the original developer as a condition by Gosford Council.
- Brisbane Avenue, Umina is an example of green space within an urban environment. The site has several native banksia trees which attract birds to the area. Many local children meet there for ball games and other active recreation.
- Benjamin Parker Reserve is valued by the community for its beautiful views of the ocean and as a haven for local birdlife within Wamberal's urban setting. The Council removed the playground equipment several years ago and the local community would like to see new equipment returned to the site. The reserve is used by a wide cross-section of the community.
- Yarram Road Park and Reserve at Bensville is a large reserve with substantial flora and fauna. It has run-down play equipment and the local community would like to see an upgrade of equipment and seating. The reserve is a meeting place for adults and children for passive and active recreation.

On behalf of the communities affected by the Council's Land Sale Strategy we ask that Central Coast Council agree to the protection and maintenance of the community's much loved urban reserves, parks and green spaces for the benefit of the communities involved and the environment now and into the future. These communities do not give their consent to the reclassification and sell-off of community lands as a revenue raising method for the local Council.

We hope that the Inquiry into Crown Lands will move towards a decision that protects public lands on the Central Coast and across New South Wales.

Susan Chidgey

On behalf of Save Central Coast Reserves

July 24, 2016