

**Submission
No 259**

INQUIRY INTO CROWN LAND IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name : Mr Donald R Woolley

Date received: 30 July 2016

The Hon. Paul Green MLC
Chair, Inquiry into Crown Land

Shoalhaven area – Collingwood Beach

Dear Sir,

During your interview with Wendy Harmer on the ABC Mornings program on Friday 22 July, you talked about the current Inquiry into Crown Land that you are chairing. You said that although submissions were initially due by 24 July, you would accept late submissions. Email submissions would be acceptable, and they need not be long. The important thing was that issues of concern should be raised, because otherwise the Inquiry could not consider matters that were not brought to its attention.

The matter I wish to raise is concerned with management of the coastal sand dunes at Collingwood Beach, which is located between Huskisson and Vincentia in Jervis Bay. These dunes were severely eroded during storms in 1974, following land clearing and subdivision, and subsequent housing development.

A concerted effort to rehabilitate the area was implemented by a number of agencies and much of the area has been substantially remediated. Some residents along the beach, in the strip of land immediately behind the dune reserve, have objected to the interference with their view of the Bay caused by the growth of native vegetation to a height of several metres.

Shoalhaven City Council, which now has responsibility for management of the dune area has not been able to prevent destruction of some stands of high banksia trees by poisoning, despite many years of trying and the use of Tree Vandalism signs erected in the relevant locations. Council has recently initiated a new approach to the issue, and following community consultation has had a draft dune management report prepared. The aim is, apparently, to gain the cooperation of the relevant residents by implementing a policy that would limit the height and density of the higher tree growth along the reserve.

Council has adopted the document “Dune Vegetation Management Plan, Collingwood Beach, NSW” prepared by NGH Environmental, subject to some variations and conditions. If implemented, the proposals in the amended document will result in

- 50% of the area having trees and tall shrubs pruned to 1 – 1.5 m and low shrubs (1.5 – 2.5m) thinned to 50 – 70% cover.
- 4% of the area, at the extreme north near Moona Creek, being allowed to grow naturally, without pruning or thinning.
- The remainder of the area being subject to thinning, pruning and underpruning.
- Seedlings will be removed when they appear, to maintain the vegetation density.

The objective of the dune management plan as adopted by Council is to maintain unrestricted views of Jervis Bay from the residences on the landward side of the Crown land. This is a poor trade-off for the increased risk of accelerated beach and dune erosion that may eventuate.

Any reduction in the health and density of the vegetation in the beach dunes along the foreshores of Jervis Bay would seem to be a retrograde move, in the light of the

past history of beach erosion and the heightened risk resulting from projected sea level rise. Council is certainly aware of the risk of beach and dune erosion from sea level rise, and has had a report prepared detailing coastal erosion remediation options in the Collingwood Beach area. The threat is real, as indicated earlier this year when storms caused erosion that has undermined parts of the newly completed Huskisson to Plantation Point shared cycleway/walking path. This occurred in areas where the path is not protected by a strongly vegetated dune area.

This matter seems to be clearly within the Terms of Reference for your Inquiry, in particular with reference to:

- TOR 1(a) the extent of Crown land and the benefits of active use and management of that land to New South Wales.
- TOR 1(c) the most appropriate and effective measures for protecting Crown land so that it is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

I respectfully request that your Inquiry examine the management regime along Collingwood Beach being developed by Shoalhaven City Council, and assess whether in its current form it will “preserve and enhance for future generations” this Crown land which is in its care.

Donald R Woolley

29 July 2016