

**Submission
No 30**

**INQUIRY INTO PLANNING SYSTEM AND THE IMPACTS
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND
COMMUNITIES**

Name: Mr Harry Johnson

Date Received: 28 October 2023

Dear Senator Higginson,

I thank you and the other Portfolio Committee No 7 members for giving me the opportunity to make a submission on the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Planning Systems and Impacts of Climate Change on Environment and Communities. living on the Clarence Valley floodplain.

My partner and I live on the floodplain at Iluka but I am particularly concerned about what is happening on the Yamba floodplain.

I value my children and grandchildren as much as I value myself. All children still too young to vote for their future world, trust adults to make prudent decisions about how best to adequately address climate change so that we don't end up where we now still continue to head.

Christine Lagarde, as a former CEO of the International Monetary Fund said at a past meeting at Davos that "we will be roasted, toasted, fried and grilled" if the world fails to take "critical decisions" to adequately address climate change,

Now as CEO of the Central European Bank Ms Lagarde still continues to express this concern as we allow the world to move from global heating towards global boiling.

So what's to be done to try to address global heating, presuming major decision makers value their children and grandchildren as much as they value themselves?

Prohibit all new housing developments on the Yamba floodplain and other areas of increasing risk of extreme flooding, floodplain riverbank erosion, coastal erosion due to increasing sea level rise and increasingly frequent and severe storms and the increasing risk of bushfires.

Prohibit Zombie Development Approvals in the above locations.

Upgrade building construction codes to ensure new homes, buildings and other infrastructure are more resistant to the anticipated more frequent and severe climate extremes so that there will be a sustainable future world for today's children and future generations.

In the lead-up to the 2019 Federal election the Hon Bill Shorten said that the real cost of addressing climate change was not what it would cost to repair the damage after each climate change-induced natural disaster but what it would continue to cost by not addressing the root causes of ever more frequent and severe climate change events.

Due to the ever increasing cost of climate change disasters, home insurance premiums are continuing to rise so that less people are able to afford to pay for home insurance.

Less new homes will be built and the ramifications of this situation are obvious with our governments' enthusiasm for population growth. Also, where are we going to accommodate the increasing number of climate refugees due to sea level rises in the Pacific region?

Our 4 basic, vital needs are clean, carbon-constrained AIR, unpolluted WATER, uncontaminated SOIL and wild SPECIES DIVERSITY and as Australia is the world champion nation in the number of wild mammal species that we have allowed to go extinct, some thought should be given to making better use of floodplain areas which are no longer suitable for housing.

Such areas could again become suitable habitat areas for threatened ecological communities.

Artificial Intelligence will increasingly lessen the availability of some forms of employment, in particular employment of a lesser skilled nature.

So to help address this anticipated loss of lesser skilled employment avenues, why not initiate labour-intensive, employment programs of a lesser-skilled nature on floodplain areas no longer suitable for housing?

One such employment initiative would be to revegetate local floodplain areas with suitable local native trees, shrubs and groundcovers. The revegetated floodplains would provide habitat for wildlife as well as low-key recreational activities such as walking, bicycle riding, wheelchair access and bird watching for local residents and visitors to our area.

Revegetation of floodplains is labour-intensive and of a lesser-skilled nature and would require a feedstock of native trees, shrubs and groundcovers. There are numbers of people in receipt of Disability Pensions or Aged Benefits who, due to their lesser physical ability, may not be able to perform the actual revegetation of the floodplain. However, seated at a covered bench, these community members could readily be involved in propagating the native plant feedstock for such programs; for it really comes down to what you can do to contribute in your local community, rather than what you're not able to do.

I have mentioned this idea to the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP who has shown interest in the idea. But an idea needs to become more than just an idea; to be useful an idea has to become a reality, while we still have time.

Senator Higginson, I commend the Yamba Community Action Network CAN Inc

for raising this important issue and for other valuable work they are doing in the local community.

I invite the Portfolio Committee No 7 to visit Yamba to undertake a site inspection down Carrs Drive, Orion Drive and Park Avenue developments.

A decade or so ago Dr Mal Washer, the former West Australian Federal Liberal politician was the Chair of a House of Representatives Inquiry into climate change and its anticipated effect on coastal communities. I was given a copy of their findings and found it to be a very useful

Report . I lent the Report to someone but the Paper wasn't returned to me. If one of your researchers can find a copy of that Report I'm sure you would find it most useful.

No child or grandchild asked to be born and I believe the world children inherit from our generation needs to be in better shape than it now is and I think what a Grade 3 8 year old girl told me 35 years ago was spot-on when she said:- "I think we should treat each other and the environment how we would like to be treated."

So I continue trying to chip away towards a more sustainable future world, thinking of the words of Henry David Thoreau:-

"If you have built castles in the air, they need not be in vain or lost; but now is the time to put foundations under them."

Senator Higginson I wish you and your Committee all the best in your deliberations in the future you choose for those you cherish, for children still too young to vote and for the wild species that never have a vote for their future.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Johnson.

Former Teacher/Coordinator, Kingfisher Recycling Centre, Aspley Special School, Brisbane.

PS If you Google Kingfisher Recycling Centre you'll see that Aspley Special School's waste minimisation initiative since it's inception in 1983 is still thriving.