

**Submission
No 110**

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

Name: Ms Jade Peace

Date Received: 3 November 2023

Dear Sue Higginson, John Ruddick, Mark Buttigieg, Anthony D'Adam, Scott Farlow, Jacqui Munro and Peter Primrose,

RE: Submission on the Inquiry into Planning System for Climate Change and Landscape Impact Mitigation

I am writing this submission as a concerned citizen. I dream of a safe, beautiful, biodiverse Australia for future generations to live in.

Unfortunately our current planning system falls short in protecting both people and the environment from the impacts of climate change. To ensure a climate-resilient and biodiverse future, we must revamp the planning process.

Key Issues with the Current Planning System:

- **Lack of Forward-Thinking and Justice:** Decision-making focuses on technicalities and short-term gains, neglecting long-term considerations, equity, and the greater good.
 - Example: Development projects like the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan in SW Sydney are ear-marking Critical Endangered Ecological Communities (CEECs) and occupied koala habitat for urban development, despite community objections.
- **Public Consultation Challenges:**
 - Community voices must be integral to the planning process, but bureaucratic hurdles, obscure language, and information overload hinder public participation.
 - Communities often voice strong opposition, but their concerns are ignored, leading to disengagement.
- **Responsibility for Environmental Protection:** Public consultation should not be the last line of defence for endangered species and habitats. The system itself should ensure protection.
 - Currently clearing of Critically Endangered Ecological Communities and Endangered Species Habitat occurs unless the public intervenes.
- **Undervaluing Biodiversity:**
 - Land with threatened species or ecological communities is less valuable than cleared land with development approval.
- **Conflicts of Interest:**
 - Decision-makers, such as councils, can benefit financially from development, leading to potential conflicts of interest.
 - Ecologists employed by developers may prioritise client interests over the public good.

Recommendations:

- **Environmental Legislation Overhaul:**
 - Strengthen environmental protection laws, especially for threatened species.
 - Empower decision-makers to reject unsuitable developments.
 - Limit re-submissions to prevent time and resource waste.
- **Public Consultation:**
 - Involve the public early in decision-making.
 - Establish Citizens Assemblies for major decisions.
 - Create a transparent, standardised process for engagement.
 - Compensate the public for their participation.
- **Climate-Resilient Design and Environmental Protection:**
 - Implement standard monitoring for ecological communities and species.

- Automatically trigger conservation processes and early interventions to protect ecological communities and habitat to prevent endangerment.
- **Recognize the Value of Biodiversity:**
 - Promote biodiversity for the well-being of both ecosystems and humanity.
 - Recognise the role biodiversity plays in climate stabilisation.
 - Link climate change and biodiversity conservation efforts.
- **Remove Conflicts of Interest:**
 - Ensure councils have the necessary financial support for community infrastructure to prevent biased decision-making influenced by developers.
- **State-Employed Ecologists:**
 - Developers pay a standard fee for ecological surveys, and the state assigns state-accredited ecologists randomly.
 - This promotes unbiased information.

In conclusion, enhancing our planning system is crucial to effectively address climate change impacts and protect our environment and communities. These recommendations aim to foster a more resilient, just, and sustainable future for all.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Sincerely,

Jade
Concerned Citizen.