

Submission
No 161

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
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NSW Submission Planning Inquiry 2023

1) Local Councils and State planning authorities too frequently disregard their own guidelines and policies with respect of **development that encroaches on the natural world:**

a) **Tree removal** on Public land (Whenever it suits a new project to do so,) occurs way too frequently. Council or State government often remove many mature trees, arguing they will simply replant elsewhere) But they should be ADDING to stock with new plantings not simply equalising. Plus it takes years if not decades to achieve the same tree maturity, and plus they often re-plant thoughtlessly and with minimal or no consultation just to tick their (guilty) bureaucratic boxes.

We need mature trees in urban environments for a whole range of reasons including the mitigating the heat island effect, biodiversity corridors, soil stabilisation and rain run-off, and obviously for fresh air.

b) **Floor-Space ratios** keep changing inappropriately in urban developments, particularly in what is already high-medium density environments of the Balmain electorate or former Leichhardt Local Government Area where I live): i.e., small blocks with small or no soft green spaces/gardens for rain to sink into *where it falls or as close to where it falls as possible*. These soft spaces are shrinking as residents and developers are permitted to build ever more over the soft spaces and gardens AND Council compliance officers and private certifiers don't check.

We must STOP concreting an already highly concreted urban world!

In summary: Government need to stick to strict guidelines on mature tree removal on public land AND stop permitting the erosion of soft green spaces in BOTH public and private spaces

c) Whilst granny flats may help the housing crisis, we need to ensure they are done only on blocks of a certain size so that soft spaces still remain for rainwater to sink into where it falls and for urban cooling generally .

2) Pressure on the natural and built environment and housing crisis will always exist whilst we never consider the degree of **the curve of population increases**.

Whilst we could have a long conversation and debate on the issue of population limits and sustainability in the developed world, including where the stats are heading and the degree to which we need versus don't need population increases in Australia specifically, one point in this realm remains less controversial:

if luxury and indulgent industries (eg gambling casinos) absorb so much of our available workforce, there will be less workers for the socially necessary industries – and this, in turn, will necessitate a migration programme with a steeper curve and put more pressure on planners and the environment more immediately.

Eg, If 5000 employees of Star Casino will have their jobs at risk if certain tax changes proceed sooner rather than later, it raises an interesting question:

Where might those 5000 people be more usefully employed? (I appreciate immediate career transitions are not entirely simple – but longer-term shifts are not as entirely complex as some make them out to be.)

We have shortages in teaching, nursing, childcare, aged care, hospitality, the list goes on. These labour shortages (aggravated by the retirement of the baby boomers, often accelerated by the pandemic I appreciate) are one of the reasons why we have recently raised the numbers in our migration programme – and this creates more immediate pressure on planning and the environment. There is a big difference between an immigration programme of 50,000 migrants a year versus 500,000 a year, for example.

So we also need to look at the structure of work and our attitudes to what is socially useful work, including taxing the big end of town to contribute to socially useful work (teachers, nurses, childcare) instead of, perhaps, setting up casinos with their spare cash.

Such a shift would allow a more modest-paced immigration programme so as to allow, in turn, for better planning that is more attuned with the natural world and the challenges climate change brings to it, as distinct from making poor decisions about housing and infrastructure under accelerated population pressures.