

Submission
No 173

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 28 October 2023

Partially
Confidential

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Concerns about development on the Yamba flood Plain (YFP).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Planning System Inquiry. My submission mainly concerns two points of the Committees Terms of Reference. These are;

- (i) Developments proposed or approved in flood and fire prone areas or areas that have become more exposed due to natural disasters as a result of climate change.
- (ii) Developments in areas that are vulnerable to rising sea levels, coastal erosion or drought conditions as a result of climate change.

Climate change causing more severe and frequent extreme weather events have started and conditions have been modelled to indicate that conditions will worsen. Rising sea levels due to a warming planet are already a reality. Areas such as the Yamba Flood Plain (YFP) will be further impacted by these changes. Attempts to utilise these areas for development by filling only drives the problem down the road, creating problems where they did not previously exist. This was evident during recent flood events in Carrs Road and Yamba Road. I have drone video of the flood event if the committee wishes to view it. I would also like to invite the Portfolio Committee to visit the YFP area to undertake an inspection of existing and proposed development sites.

The impact of hundreds of thousands of tonnes of soil fill onto the YFP along Carrs Road through several hundred thousand truck trips has exacerbated flooding for Yamba Road. Carrs Road also had extensive flooding from Yamba Road to the Lake. All properties were isolated by flood water, St James Primary School was surrounded by flood water and access to the Lake was closed. The importation of huge volumes of soil has changed the hydrology of the area resulting in significant flooding in areas previously relatively flood free.

By comparing a greenfield site (no fill) to the YFP (filled) it is obvious there are significant environmental impacts for the local community and the environment for the soil filled development sites. The physical importation of soil involving hundreds of thousands of truck movements from quarry to fill site wastes non-renewable fossil fuels, generates significant greenhouse gas emissions in addition to other hazardous air pollutants, including fine particulate matter (PM2.5), nuisance dust (>PM10), noise and loss of amenity for local residents and other road users. We have also witnessed significant deterioration of roads into Yamba resulting from heavy haulage vehicles as well as damage to private vehicles. The imported fill also has the potential to mobilise contaminants in the fill into a pristine environment through run-off and wind generated airborne dust emissions. As witnessed during the recent floods in Carrs Road silt/contaminants were observed washing away from the development sites draining towards the Lake (Oyster Channel). This material has unknown effects on aquatic species and the Lake and river system ecosystems.

Poor planning decisions have led to and are continuing to impact on the Yamba environment and amenity of residents. These decisions also lead to exacerbation of climate change through increase greenhouse gas emissions which feedback to implications for low lying areas, such as the YFP with increase in sea levels and more extreme weather events. An opportunity exists to reconsider development on the YFP and perhaps consideration be given to more appropriate development sites that do not require importation of vast amounts of fill to overcome potential flooding or effects of increasing sea levels.

Yours faithfully