

**Submission
No 206**

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

Name: Col Shephard
Date Received: 17 November 2023

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Name: Col Shephard
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Yamba NSW 2464

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Portfolio Committee No 7
Planning and Environment
NSW Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY 2000

***Submission to the inquiry into the planning system and
the impacts of climate change on the environment and communities***

We thank you for providing an opportunity to make a submission in relation to this vitally important matter. Please be advised that we do not seek to give evidence at the Committee's hearing.

We are residents of Yamba and shall be addressing some of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference in this submission.

Colin has resided in Yamba since 1976, whilst Jill has resided in Yamba since 1979. Consequently, we have witnessed many changes to Yamba's landscape since 1976.

We are terribly disappointed with the NSW government in relation to its failure to move expeditiously to improve our State's planning system and prevent further developments on the floodplains of NSW. That the failure has been experienced under the former government and the current government is cause for grave concern.

As a society we are now much more acquainted with climate change and its impacts on our environment and communities, and thus have even more reason to hold serious concerns in relation to the apparent reluctance of government/s to recognise the urgent need to address impending disasters for our environment and society because of climate change. This provides cause for even greater concern. We have genuine the fears for our own personal safety and welfare and that of others, including future generations of Australians.

As residents of Yamba since January 1976 we have witnessed more than our fair share of flooding events in the area referred to as the Lower Clarence. However, having stated that, we inform the Committee that the floods we have had the misfortune to experience in more recent years have caused us ever-increasing concerns for our safety and welfare, along with that of other residents of the Lower Clarence, but especially residents in our immediate locality, the township of Yamba.

We have owned and resided in our home in Street Yamba since December 1989, having previously owned and resided at another location also in Street Yamba. Hence, we can speak with a good deal of experience about the impact and consequences of local flood events in Yamba.

To the near south-west of our home is an area, referred to as West Yamba, where major housing developments have been created and others are planned.

The statement above requires further qualification: the West Yamba area is a natural floodplain, but it has been catastrophically altered to become a series of human-made (HM) "islands" via the "importation" of "mountains of fill" from external sources. And upon those HM islands, hundreds of homes have been approved, with many already constructed. One such HM island now has a height of more than 3 metres above the initial, natural floodplain!

A significant problem resulting from the added fill to this area is the subsequent relocation of water, especially in times of flooding, to other locations elsewhere in Yamba. We respectfully inform you that the "spill-over" effects of the relocated water are far from insignificant.

Worse is yet to come should developers secure the approval of our local government, Clarence Valley Council, to undertake further housing development projects on the floodplain.

Further preposterous proposed developments in the West Yamba area will exacerbate the flood experiences of recent times. We kid you not, what was experienced in 2022 will be like a picnic in the park compared with what, unfortunately, many residents are likely to experience in future.

Although neither of our homes (previous and current) were impacted by local floods we are very cognisant of the fact that next time (AND THERE WILL BE A NEXT TIME!), we might not be so fortunate.

The insurance industry in Australia has done its sums: the cost of our combined home and contents insurance (policy commences 9 January, annually) jumped by 43.39% in 2023, compared to 2022.

If the insurance industry can do its sums, why cannot our NSW government?

Committee members, we implore you to act promptly and have our NSW government and its departments, especially Planning and Environment, get their acts together and move at a rate of knots to address the impending environmental and social disaster that awaits us.

To enable your Committee to obtain an up-to-date and first-hand experience and understanding of the lay of the land in our local area we respectfully invite the Committee to visit and inspect the sites at West Yamba which, should the government fail to stop/prevent developments, will be added to the list of culprits responsible for inflicting further damage on the lives and livelihoods of families in Yamba.

We look forward to having an opportunity to meet with the Committee in Yamba and undertake an inspection tour of the hazards that has been created in the local area.

Yours sincerely,

Colin & Jill Shephard