



# Bonny Hills Progress Association INC.

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## **Submission: Part 3A Environmental Assessment Applications**

**Application Name: Rainbow Beach, Bonny Hills**

**Application Number: MP\_060085/MP07\_0001**

**Attention: Major Projects Assessment, Department of Planning, GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001**

**Copy to: Administrator, Port Macquarie Hastings Council**

### **Introduction**

Bonny Hills Progress Association is a voluntary incorporated organisation whose committee is elected at an annual general meeting<sup>1</sup>. In a nutshell BHPA's charter is to safeguard the Vision that the Bonny Hills community has agreed for the village and surrounds – primarily upholding and enhancing the reasons why people come to live in such a locale.

Ensuring that a major development such as that proposed for Area 14 in the Port Macquarie Hastings Council region, (of which this development is a part), complies with the State and Local Government rules and regulations, that there are not likely to be unintended consequences impacting on the community, while capitalising on the opportunities presented, is core to the BHPA charter.

### **Approach**

The sheer volume of paperwork involved and the technical knowledge required to critique this Part 3A application in detail are such that BHPA will rely on PMHC's officers to ensure that the many compliance issues are in order.

Our submission focuses heavily on the likely unintended consequences of a large increase in population. It also draws on the comments and concerns enunciated by community members at a recent community forum convened in Bonny Hills by the developers to discuss the Part 3A application.

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<sup>1</sup> BHPA operates under the Model Rules for Incorporated Associations set up under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984, which is under the auspices of the NSW Office of Fair Trading.

## Main points

Providing a statement of support (or otherwise) from the community for this large project - as requested for submissions - is not possible.

The absence of sufficient detail about what this development will actually look like and what can actually be realised given the developer's obvious reluctance and the Council's and State Government's reluctance and/or inability to pay for supporting infrastructure and services means that the community would be signing a blank cheque if it were to offer unqualified support.

When asked for more information at the community forum the developers were not able to provide convincing detail about:

- the actual urban layout of streets or specifics regarding the types of housing and housing densities and heights that would be built adjacent to the village and in the surrounding suburbs
- the design of the village and nature of businesses that it would contain
- the nature of the eco tourist development
- that schools would be built any time soon and if so by whom;
- that the sports fields would be developed any time soon
- adequacy of junctions with, and improvements required to the adjacent arterial road, Ocean Drive, for the expected increase in traffic loads

The devil will be in the detail and the detail is not being disclosed at this concept stage.

There are more questions than answers and so people are naturally suspicious and sceptical that the possible benefits to the local communities are sufficient to outweigh the many concerns they have about potential downsides. In short, housing for more people is being provided, (the standard of which is not known), and there is no confidence that the supporting infrastructure and services, which are already judged to be substandard for the existing population, will be adequately catered for.

So while there should be upsides, such as short term employment opportunities during the development phase, and longer term advantages that a greater critical mass might bring in the forms of demand for improved services, views about this potential are being swamped by unanswered concerns about the many likely downsides in the eyes of the community.

Specifics regarding the concerns of the community are set out as follows:

1. The parlous state of local and State government finances is of overriding concern as existing infrastructure and services are deemed to be inadequate for the current population let alone the projected doubling of population via Area 14. It is more than apparent that the developer will only provide what they are obliged to, and so the shortfall will be large across the range of infrastructure and services needed.
2. Ocean Drive, the arterial route going past the development is in an abysmal state already to handle the current volume and variety of traffic – on Council's reckoning equivalent in numbers of vehicle trips to that on the adjacent Pacific Highway. Additional traffic flow onto and along this road through the main streets of villages to the north and south is untenable without major upgrades and diversions. There is no apparent provision for this in the short section adjacent to the development let alone along the length of this Drive.
3. Housing or development that is not consistent with the existing heights and densities in adjacent villages will compromise the very reasons people come to live in this part of the world. Given the lack of detail regarding this issue there is concern that there is an agenda for considerable increases and the possibility of high rise and highly intensive housing developments in particular – both of which would cut across the community's vision for the future of this area.

4. Proposed sports ground – the developer indicated that this would only be taken as far as the site being filled by them and beyond that it would be Council's responsibility to put the appropriate facilities in place. There is no confidence that this would happen any time soon.
5. Proposed schools – there is no confidence that these will be built any time by soon, and certainly not with public funds. As indicated below the southern school site is totally inappropriate and the considerable amount of fill required for this is not part of the development.
6. The integrity of the proposed wildlife corridor to the south is severely compromised by narrow bottlenecks between artificial lakes and between these lakes and the southern edge of the proposed estate. This was pointed out to the developer in an earlier submission by BHPA but nothing has changed. If the southern school site does go ahead this will further compromise the corridor as it is effectively in swampland in the middle of the corridor.

The significance of this wildlife corridor cannot be over stated as it is one of only two left in Bonny Hills between the coastal dunes flora and the larger tracts of flora to the west given that previous development has made such significant inroads into the connecting floral reserves.

7. Acid sulphate soil exposure to drying out during the creation of the artificial lake – the sole purpose of which, from the developer's viewpoint, is to supply fill for the proposed development – is a potential concern. We trust the relevant authorities have this on their radar.
8. Eco tourist development – set in the middle of the fragile dune ecosystem between the villages of Bonny Hills and Lake Cathie, with access to the ocean envisaged: inappropriate development here with associated impacts of increased human traffic has the potential to do considerable damage. The problem is that there is no detail upon which to mount a reliable assessment of likely impacts.

We trust these views will assist in guiding your final decision and thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely

Roger Barlow  
President

Phil Hafey  
Secretary