



Bonny Hills Progress Association INC.

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The General Manager
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
PO Box 84
Port Macquarie NSW 2444
CC Peter Cameron

Re: PMHC Draft Urban Growth Management Strategy 2017-2036

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Council's Urban Growth Management Plan 2017–2036.

Overall this is an impressive and thoughtfully constructed document, well backed up by data, analysis and broad community engagement. And it weaves an understandable path through the complicated regulatory planning environment.

Although Bonny Hills and Lake Cathie are broadly considered as one in the document, Bonny Hills Progress Association and Lake Cathie Progress Association have elected to make separate submissions focussing on their own villages and surrounds, with overlapping commentary as appropriate.

LGA wide comments:

- We accept that future development will occur, BUT it needs to be planned much more intelligently than we have done in the past. The UGMS document appears to recognise this but to date there is insufficient evidence that this recognition is being translated into practice; particularly in terms of integrating development with the natural environmental assets of our LGA.
- The lack of an agreed Biodiversity Strategy for the LGA is a serious omission when planning ahead 20 years; meaning that areas for expansion are being investigated in a partial vacuum. This has been our undoing in the past.

Integration of the recently completed Biodiversity Strategy into future planning investigations of potential areas growth should be expedited.

- The current approach of broad scale clear-felling vegetation on new and in-fill developments (see attached photos as examples) has to stop. The community is absolutely appalled by this approach to development.
- Sympathetic development is possible (example photos attached) and should be the new norm. Offsets are at best a poor joke – it is just not credible that an ecosystem can be transplanted from one location to another.

Comments specific to the Bonny Hills – Lake Cathie area

- Our communities have identified that the reasons they live here, or have moved here, are very much about the low-key style of living AND the natural beauty of the flora, fauna, seascape and waterways (Ref: the recent ECWOC meetings at Lake Cathie and Bonny Hills)
- Development needs to be sympathetic to these views – otherwise we will end up with yet another overdeveloped coastal strip.
- Impacts of Area 14 are expected to be considerable on the existing villages particularly on through-traffic and the use of existing facilities and amenities
- AND it is suggested in the Strategy that this area will be the second fastest growing in the LGA, with significant additional areas for expansion to be investigated, and consequent additional impacts.
- Our communities will need convincing that infrastructure will be adequate for the task – Ocean Drive being a clear example, (for which, fortunately, resources have been set aside in the immediate operational plans to investigate priorities for development along its entire length).
- BUT this also begs the question: is taking the BH bypass completely off the table a sensible long-term planning decision given the projections for rapid growth? Or should provision be made for the eventual need?
- Areas under investigation eg to the west of Bonny Hills, are mosaics including many patches/strips of high quality floral biodiversity and wildlife habitat. This underlines the importance of avoiding the broad-scale, clear-felling that is the current norm for development [as shown in the attached photos]. Any development on these sites will need to be carefully orchestrated to leave, protect, buffer and connect these most sensitive areas. The document appears to recognise the need for this.
- At least two of the areas for investigation appear to be far too pristine to even contemplate developing:
 - The area immediately west of Lake Cathie (photo provided) is particularly well covered with natural habitat and is close to a significant water body with associated bird life.

- The triangular area to the south of Bonny Hills on the western side of Ocean Drive, denoted as Residential-Developing – this area includes an array of beautiful flora and is quite undulating making it totally unsuited for wholesale development in our view.
- The proposed Light Industrial zone (on the corner of Ocean Drive and Houston Mitchell Drive) is poorly sited on the gateway into the existing villages and the new Area 14 development, and appears too small for the purpose unless more land can be accessed.
- BUT if development of this zone does go ahead, consideration needs to be given to:
 - The adequacy of the area available – it is hemmed in by forest to the west and very low swampy land to the south.
 - An effective aural and visual buffer along the roadways
 - Effective control of run-off to the south as this flows down under Ocean Drive and eventually into Duchess Creek and onto Rainbow Beach
 - Careful consideration of vehicular entry and egress to ensure that traffic flows are not impeded on the existing roadways. Internal parking will need to be adequate as well, requiring additional space.
- However, the suggestion in Jon Slater’s submission could be worth pursuing given the greater area involved.

And finally, a point worth making is that not only is adequate planning absolutely essential, but timely implementation of those plans is critical. This can be the downfall of planning - ending up as planning to plan rather than planning to do.

If you would like to discuss any of these points further, we will be only too happy to oblige.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Hafey

BHPA Secretary

21 December 2017

What we don't want to see:



Wholesale large scale tree felling in new developments



Wholesale clearing of an area like this, west of Lake Cathie and marked for investigation as residential



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Wholesale tree felling in developments infilling existing residential areas



What we do want to see:



Sensitive residential development with interspersed existing native trees and shrubs and tree-lined pathways