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New Planning System
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39,
Sydney 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Submission on the NSW Planning Review White Paper and Planning Bills

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on some aspects of the NSW Planning Review White Paper and Planning Bills.

Bonny Hills is a coastal town approximately 30km south of Port Macquarie on the Mid North Coast. At present there are approximately 1200 dwellings and a population of around 3000. There are major developments planned immediately to the north (Area 14) as well as many other development opportunities including residential, both low and medium density, commercial, aged care facilities and retirement communities.

The Bonny Hills Progress Association (BHPA) is committed to maintaining the village lifestyle the community presently enjoys and works closely with Port Macquarie Hastings Council and developers to ensure that developments are environmentally sustainable, appropriate for the area and in the community's best interests.

Object of the Act

One of the major concerns of the BHPA is the rejection of the concept of "ecologically sustainable development (ESD)". There is no doubt that the "sustainable development" provisions in addition to ensuring the "financial viability of proposed development" will threaten many of the pristine waterways and wildlife habitats in our local area in addition to threatening our village lifestyle. The Bonny Hills community has worked hard, in conjunction with many other local groups and organisations, to ensure that our environmentally sensitive areas have been well managed and are sustainable. The provisions of the White Paper place our local environment under serious threat.

In addition, the Objects of the new Act must include the promotion of quality of life, residential amenity and local character.

Community Participation Charter

Community participation in development planning is essential in order to maintain the existing community standards and atmosphere. Ordinary citizens and local organisations must have input on development applications that impact on them and adequate training and financial support must be made available to ensure that that input is informed and accurate.

The BHPA is concerned that plans developed under the umbrella of a Community Participation Charter are rendered meaningless by the range of ways in which strategic planning controls can be disregarded. These include the ability of the Minister to amend strategic plans at any point in time; the ability of Councils or other planning authorities to approve spot rezonings after Local Plans have been made; the ability of the Director-General of Planning to grant proponents Strategic Compatibility Certificates even if the proposed development is inconsistent with existing local planning controls in Local Environmental Plans and the wide discretion of the Minister to identify State Significant Development.

Rural and Residential Zones

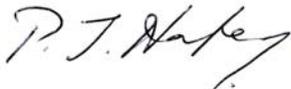
Low and medium density residential zones have vastly different attributes and requirements and the proposal to amalgamate the two into one Residential Zone will not simplify development. Rather, it provides the opportunity for inconsistent interpretation of the regulations and neighbourhoods which lack overall themes.

In addition, land currently protected by E3 (environmental management) zonings must be treated differently to adjoining rural land.

Review of decisions

The Act should ensure that residents and organisations have the right of appeal to the Land and Environment Court on any matter involving planning and development.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Hafey
Secretary
27 June 2013