

West Culburra IPC Meeting – 24/7/18

Ladies and Gentleman, there are two key issues that have been provided as points for the Department of Planning and Environments recommendation for refusal that must be addressed here today. They are “stormwater” and “It’s not in the public Interest”.

It seems that one of the recommendations for refusal of the West Culburra development is on the grounds that it will create stormwater run off into Lake Wollumboola. Of course it will, because it already does.... and it’s untreated. No more or no less will go in there than what currently does. A minimal amount of the proposed West Culburra development runs into the lake. Let me tell you this. Currently, around 40% or approximately 600 homes in Culburra Beach have their stormwater running directly into the lake completely untreated. It runs straight out from the streets of Greenbank Grove, West Crescent, Fairlands Street, Carlton Crescent, Cross Street, Park Street, The Lake Circuit, East Crescent, Silvermere Street, Lee Street, Jopejija Crescent, Broadview Avenue, Eastbourne Avenue, Hope Street, Mona Street, Fairlight Way, Plimsol Place, Haven Street and even the retirement village. They all have stormwater running directly into Lake Wollumboola and yet we’re told that one of the reasons for recommending refusal is stormwater, when quite clearly the impact from West Culburra is insignificant compared to what happens now. It just doesn’t make sense at all.

When you read the report provided by the Department of Planning and Environment you would think that the applicants hadn’t done any research into the environmental issues when in fact rigorous scientific assessments have been done into water quality and flora and fauna. Report after report and study after study have been provided. According to the proponents the water quality consultants have

consistently demonstrated with all the stormwater treatment measures proposed that they have delivered a “Neutral or Beneficial Effect” on downstream receiving waters

The areas of the site within the Lake Wollumboola catchment are:

- Stage 1 residential area – 1.93Ha that will be drained into the Crookhaven catchment through Water Quality facilities that will treat to Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE)
- Stage 3 residential area (near playing fields) – 1.74 Ha that will be drained into the Crookhaven catchment through Water Quality facilities that will treat to Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE)
- Stage 5 Industrial area – 1.38Ha that will be drained into the Crookhaven catchment through Water Quality facilities that will treat to Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE)
- The roundabout area – 0.6Ha that will drain to Lake Wollumboola through Water Quality facilities that will treat to Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE)
- The playing fields – 4.8Ha that drains to Lake Wollumboola through Water Quality facilities that treat to Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE)

So the total area within the catchment is about 10.45Ha.

The total area of development is approximately 115.6Ha. So the area in the catchment is about 9% but as these small areas are either diverted into the Crookhaven and/or treated to NorBE stands the impact on the Lake and the Crookhaven are ZERO!!!! This has been scientifically proven through best practice WQ modelling – not just “claimed” like the people against the development who have done no science at all but want to keep talking about how many birds the Lake supports. No one is arguing with that but the opposition to this development does nothing but make claims with nothing to back it up. THERE WILL BE NO

IMPACT

The second issue is the bizzare point that “it is not in the public interest”. Every single public meeting that has been held in Culburra Beach in the last ten years has been in favour of this development proceeding. Culburra Beach needs good sustainable residential development if it is to survive. Development that will provide an increase in permanent population. I can tell you that in my role as President of the Culburra Beach and Districts Chamber of Commerce, business owners talk to me and they are hurting. The lack of permanent population is affecting them and they can't survive on the busier time of year that lasts for around three to four months. You've all seen businesses closing here, the most recent being the hardware store, something that has been in Culburra Beach for around 37 years - now forced to close due to lack of people in the town on a permanent basis. When you walked in to that store there were always young people from Culburra Beach employed there. They no longer have jobs. Let me give you some information about permanent population in Culburra Beach and Orient Point with figures obtained from the official census data. As people from mainly Sydney move in to Culburra Beach and buy holiday homes that are no longer permanently occupied we see pressure being put on our permanent population numbers.

In 2001 the permanent population of Culburra Beach and Orient Point was 3,622. In 2006 that dropped by 206 people to 3,416. In 2011 it dropped a further 125 to 3,291. In 2016 it actually increased by 193 to 3,484. Well you may ask, why did this happen.....it happened, because we had good sustainable development in the form of a large Woolworths Supermarket that attracted families to the area. A development that some people in this room opposed and objected to.

Businesses employ people and many here have reduced the number of staff they employ. They are struggling, and if you don't want to have to travel to Nowra to go to the Butcher, if you don't want to travel to Nowra to go to the Chemist, if you don't want to travel to Nowra to go to the Post Office or to go to Pathology, if you don't want to travel to Nowra to go to the service station and heaven forbid the Supermarket, then we must have this development, because if we don't, that's what will happen.

No one in Culburra Beach wants to see high-rise development on the beachfront. We don't want massive commercial developments on the beach. We just want good sustainable development so that our permanent population can grow and our town can survive and West Culburra will provide this.

Affordability of real estate is a huge issue. The median house price in Culburra Beach in 2017 according to realestate.com was around \$600,000 while in Nowra where there is ample land supply it was \$450,000 for the same time, \$150,000 less because of supply and demand. Young people who grew up with their families here in Culburra Beach and want to stay here just can't afford to. We need to address the supply and demand crisis urgently and West Culburra allows us to do this and put a halt to escalating prices.

So we're told that this development "is not in the public interest". I'd like to get an indication of support from you for the West Culburra Development. Ladies and gentlemen, can I have a show of hands for those in favour of the West Culburra development proceeding?Thank you. Now can I have a show of hands for those against the development proceeding? Now, please keep your hands up if you live in Culburra Beach, if you work in Culburra Beach or if you own a property in Culburra Beach. In other words if you don't work here, if you don't live here or own property here put your hand down now.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think we can see that there's a significant majority of people in this town that want this development to proceed. (emhasise) How can the Department of Planning and Environment get it so wrong when they say, "this is not in the public interest". I'll tell you how. They have been constantly harassed, bombarded and brainwashed by a small but extremely vocal and active minority who don't care about the wellbeing of the normal residents of this town that live and work here on a daily basis. One person had the ordacity to go on ABC Radio and say they had the support of the community and the young people of Culburra Beach when it comes to opposing this development. Well you can see quite clearly here today that they don't. Ladies and gentlemen this development IS in the public interest and it's time that was recognized.

Brian Muller

