

Independent Planning Commission NSW

Level 3, 201 Elizabeth St

Sydney NSW 2000

RE: West Culburra Concept Proposal (SSD 3846)

To Commission members,

My name is Jan Donney and I have been a long time visitor (since 1986) to Culburra Beach as well as having owned an investment property/holiday house in Culburra since 2001. I bought another house and moved to Orient Point in 2014 and have lived here ever since. My daughter moved to Culburra Beach in 2012 and my granddaughter moved here 18 months ago. My sister owns a rental property in Orient Point and a holiday house in Culburra Beach. As you can see, I have deep financial and family ties to the area.

After attending the public meeting at the Culburra Beach Bowling Club yesterday and I am compelled to write to the Commission first of all to express:

1. My objection to the Concept Proposal
2. My distress at the nature of the meeting

Objection to the Proposal

I do not agree with the proposal and recommend its refusal for the following reasons.

- **Environment**

The environmental issues have been long established and are irrefutable. The speakers yesterday seemed to suggest that the proponent has worked with the Planning Department to address these issues but on the reading the Departments recommendation document it appears that this is not the case and most issues are still unresolved. For example, the clearing of Mangroves to provide 'views', water contamination from run off which will adversely affect oyster leases and the aboriginal midden sites which seem set to become a tourist attraction with predictable outcomes.

There is also run off into the Lake Wollumboola catchment to address as well as the clearing of a vast amount of vegetation with resulting destruction of native flora and fauna.

- **Traffic and Infrastructure**

Culburra Beach is serviced by a single narrow road which is susceptible to traffic issues even with the current population. There are trees on both sides of the road and if one of those trees comes down across the road after the Callala turn off then there is no other way into or out of the town. I myself have been stuck on the road for hours waiting for a tree to be cleared from the road and that has happened more than once. If the tree falls across power lines then electricity to Culburra is affected as well. I see nothing in the proposal to upgrade Culburra Road.

According to the recommendation document there are issues as well regarding the roundabout access to the new development and these issues have not been resolved.

- **Social Issues**

The speakers yesterday seemed to concentrate mainly on the social benefits the new development will bring to Culburra Beach so I would like to address this at some length. I would also note that a number of the speakers for the proposal were real estate agents who of course will have their own reasons for supporting the development.

First I would like to question the 'Culburra will die/is dying' cry that was repeated ad nauseum by the speakers. Apart from the questionable ethics of presenting conjecture as fact, the implication seems to be that planting a satellite village entirely separated from the existing town will somehow resuscitate the old town centre.

My points are

1. The new village will have no cohesive connection to 'Culburra Beach as it is several kilometres away and is separated from the existing town by the Industrial estate and the sewerage works. I fear that this will promote more division in the community as there would be an 'Old ' and 'New' Culburra
2. I see that there are commercial premises planned for the new precinct so it stands to reason that the existing businesses will be affected adversely and could lead to the existing cafes and specialty shops losing business.
3. As far as the town being in the process of 'dying' is concerned, there are more real estate agents in town than any other business and they wouldn't be there if people weren't buying houses. The hardware shop is closing because they can't compete in price or stockholding with the big hardware stores in Nowra. Case in point, local tradesmen all use Isons hardware in Nowra while householders of course go to Bunnings.

No matter how many people live in Culburra Beach, this will still be the case. I think that any small to medium town with a major centre only 15 minutes away would struggle to keep businesses viable.

Maybe if business people paid more attention to service and providing value for money then they might find that local people will patronize them. Case in point, the Bowling Club buys meat for the meat raffle from out of town, not from the local butcher.

4. Property prices were also cited as a reason to approve the development however I fail to see the logic in this. It was proposed that if more housing stock is available then the house prices will automatically fall but there were no statistics or facts to back this up. New houses will always sell at a premium over existing housing stock and I have yet to see a developer who does not want to get as much return on investment as possible.
5. Increase in job opportunities was also a major issue but again no facts or figures were presented. No community, be it town or suburb has enough local jobs for the existing population and people will always have to travel to access work. There are major centres with job opportunities within reasonable driving distance and workers will continue to seek out these opportunities just as they always have. Building the new development will certainly provide some short term employment but as I understand it most home building companies retain their own crews of labourers and tradespeople and the local people would only be used as a top up.

For all of the above reasons I cannot support the West Culburra Development Proposal in its current form and recommend it be refused.

Public Meeting

I would now like to express my concerns regarding the meeting yesterday as the level of aggression and vitriol aimed at citizens legitimately expressing their views was absolutely appalling.

Speakers who named and vilified Frances Bray should have been stopped and warned immediately as this was a deliberate provocation to certain members of the audience to start cat calling and jeering.

Regardless of whether people agree with her or not, she has the right to speak and be heard without being intimidated by the aggressive and unruly members of the audience. The fact that the Club catering staff was so concerned at the level of aggression that they called the police speaks for itself.

I would like to particularly address Brian Muellers speech. The call for a show of hands should have been stopped immediately because the repercussions of that have started already. People that put their hands up against the proposal and some that even abstained from both for and against are now being

singled out and abused in the town in which they live. This was predictable and I believe deliberate on Brians behalf and a quite cynical manipulation of a very volatile situation.

I would also like to take exception to Brians '*conjecture as fact*' tirade about businesses closing if the development is not approved. His hysterical outburst aimed at scaring the older population witless by telling them they'll all be living in a dead town with no facilities if the proposal is rejected was cynical beyond expression as there was no factual basis for this presented at all.

This development proposal has torn the town apart over many years and the sooner it is resolved the sooner the healing can begin, however, after yesterday I fear that many relationships have been destroyed irrevocably.

Yours truly

Jan Donney

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