

Independent Planning Commission NSW  
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**To Commission members,  
Objection to West Culburra Concept Proposal SSD 3846**

I recommend that the Independent Planning Commission refuse the West Culburra Concept Proposal (SSD 3846).

I have been a part-time resident of Culburra Beach for twenty years and have owned a tenanted house in Orient Point for eighteen years.

My concerns with the current proposal are:

It is of massive scale extending to 650 housing lots, commercial, leisure, tourist and industrial components which are disconnected to the Culburra Beach/Orient Point villages. It requires the destruction of the huge area of 75 hectares of native bushland destroying bird and animal habitat and generating a huge amount of runoff which will flow into the Crookhaven River with a lesser amount flowing into the very sensitive Lake Wollumboola.

I visited Culburra Beach regularly for many years before purchasing my house here, I chose to come here as I appreciate the unspoilt condition of the beaches, the river and the lake. I value the village lifestyle. I believe the future economic prosperity of Culburra Beach lies with eco-tourism, with the enjoyment of our outstanding natural resources and environment. While sections of the community seem to believe a massive housing development will provide economic impetus there is no explanation as to how this would occur. The Shoalhaven area has a long-term high rate of unemployment and nothing concrete is suggested to match housing development with employment opportunities. In fact the Culburra West proposal threatens our successful local industries of oyster farming, fishing and prawning with run off of contaminated water.

I am concerned the proposal has failed to assess surface and ground water impacts on Lake Wollumboola and the Estuary and therefore cannot guarantee negative consequences to our waterways. I am concerned the local roads are insufficient to provide for traffic into and out of Culburra Beach and I am concerned the middens and other sites of importance to the local Jerringa community are being shown disrespect with the planned cycleway/path through areas of significance and that the middens themselves could be turning into tourist attractions (John Toom, public meeting, 24/07/2018).

For all the above reasons I support a refusal of the above proposal.

I would now like to address in more detail the economic argument in favour of the development. This has lately been reflected in the common theme of speakers in support of the proposed development as "Culburra is dying". This myth has been retailed with great vigour recently in radio and newspaper interviews and very loudly at the public meeting held at Culburra Beach on 24/07/2018 before the Independent

Planning Commission. Prominent among the most vigorous proponents of this myth are local real estate agents and business owners who feel they have something to gain from further development. In fact the population of Culburra Beach has increased from 2677 (2011 census) to 2874 (2016 census). Within the same period comparable villages of the Shoalhaven have shown far less increase in population, Greenwell Point has had a population increase from 1198 to 1209, Shoalhaven Heads from 2995 to 3059 and Callala Bay from 2121 to 2196.

This argument is nothing more than part of a scare campaign designed to prey on the fears of the old, disenfranchised and vulnerable community members thereby motivating them to support development. While independent hardware stores in regional areas and the suburbs have been closing for decades due to the expansion of the large successful chain, the announced imminent closure of the hardware store in Culburra is presented as the harbinger of doom with grim threats of the post office, chemist shop and Woolworths likely to follow suit with old people forced to drive to Nowra to shop but simultaneously being unable to do so as their licences are likely to restrict them to a 15 kilometre range. And the panacea to all this is the creation of a golf course without facilities and a separated town (with its own retail shops and industrial estate).

A sub-genre of this argument includes the necessity to decrease the proportion of part time residents, who are portrayed as not contributing sufficiently to the local economy. In my twenty years of part time residence (I have been retired since 2001 and spend at least half my time at Culburra) and ownership of the Otway St property I have spent tens of thousands of dollars in the local economy with extensive repairs and improvements to both properties, ongoing lawn and garden maintenance, patronage of local shops, services, cafes and restaurants. It is very likely some part time residents actually stimulate the economy to the same or a greater extent than full time residents but the commonly held view is constantly raised that the Culburra West project is the only hope the local economy has. No basis for this belief has been given or researched, and with its own commercial precinct and being on the road to Nowra it appears very likely should the Culburra West development proceed that any future residents would do most of their business outside of Culburra Beach.

Finally I wish to express my deep concern in relation to the meeting held by the IPC at the Culburra Bowling Club on 24.07.2018. While many speakers were totally disrespectful of Frances Bray and members of the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association and allowed to proceed while engendering catcalls and shouted abuse, Brian Muller, real estate agent of Culburra Beach, was permitted to continue speaking in a loud and vitriolic harangue in which he identified and disparaged Frances Bray. Furthermore he was also permitted call for a vote in favour of and against the proposed developments which led to catcalling, shouted abuse and threatening behaviour towards those who were seen to oppose the developments and indeed those who abstained from voting. His speech was consciously incendiary and the repercussions will continue in our community for some time to come. I was subject to verbal abuse and I know several people similarly subject to abuse. Some of these incidents have been subsequent to the meeting and have occurred in isolated situations. Furthermore the meeting should have been held in an alcohol free venue, the group of men shouting and calling out abuse at the back of the outside area were visibly affected by alcohol and it is no wonder the police were called by club staff concerned the meeting was out of

control. The meeting needed a very firm hand by the chair, the level of noise and abuse should never have been permitted, the "vote" should have been stopped immediately as the long history of division and personal vilification related to this issue are very well known and extremely destructive in the community. Without doubt some people will feel unable to participate in some community events while some social and business relationships will be detrimentally affected.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne McCarthy

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25.07.2018