

Late submission of objections to:
MP10_0136MOD1 Riverside at Tea Gardens Modifications to subdivision

Although recent changes to legislation permit modifications to existing approved concept plans it seems to me that the number and inter-dependent complexities of the Riverside proposals should require a new concept plan.

Proposed amendments such as changes to land use boundaries, provision of a riverside walk, biodiversity offset package, amended stormwater and groundwater management, changes to provision of road infrastructure upgrades, changes to bushfire management, changes to servicing and modification to enable keeping of cats on site and deletion or changed future assessment requirements. Collectively these and other proposed amendments amount to a significant change to the original approval.

In particular I strenuously object to the following:

BULK EARTHWORKS

According to Fig.8 bulk earthworks, the shortfall of fill needed to be imported to the site is 362,000m³ (543,000 tonnes). It is proposed by the developer to source this vast quantity from Karuah Quarry involving approximately 16,500 truck and dog loads which equates to 33,000 truck movements. This impost on Council infrastructure, the environment (fine particulate exhaust emissions and rubber dust) and local residents could be eliminated by dredging the Myall River, the health of which is in a desperate condition due to siltation of migratory sand from upstream. The river is so choked that mangrove islands are growing rapidly in area and a severe rainfall event in the upper catchment could easily flood this development with finished ground level of 2.3m A.H.D. as well as existing residential areas of Tea Gardens and low areas of Hawks Nest such as Swan Bay.

Such a condition, albeit to a lesser degree when the river was far less choked, has occurred several times in the past when the river level remained above high tide mark for up to 30 hours.

By using this dredged spoil it could be pumped as a slurry direct to the site. This would be a win win situation for the developer, the Midcoast Council, State Government (which normally funds this but cannot provide funding now) the river and the local community. Such operations are carried out regularly at Hawks Nest "Jimmy's Beach" on the northern foreshore of Port Stephens and a landfill operation adjoining Limekilns at Tea Gardens about 6 years ago. Potential negative impacts need to be compared to positive attributes.

OFFSETS

How does an offset benefit the flora and fauna, much of which are becoming threatened in this area. I have lived and worked in this area as a contractor for nearly 40 years and have observed the decline of wildlife which was once abundant. It seems elusive species such as Echidna, Goanna, Spotted Quoll, Quail, Banded Rail, even native bees were not

noted on the original fauna study but are present. We need to protect what remains and keep them in their own habitat. A 3 day jaunt by ecologists funded by the proponent is not proof that species other than those observed are not present.

TRAFFIC FLOW

A 2010 traffic count in September does not indicate the actual peak flow – holiday time. This is a coastal holiday area and the population can expand by 400% at peak times. The computer modeling can only be as good as the input data.

CHANGES TO BUSHFIRE MANAGEMENT AND CHANGE TO SERVICING

State Government guidelines and R.F.S. assessment should be final and not negotiable. It is shameful that Sheargold's representative implied that R.F.S. doesn't know what they are talking about.

If a fire started in the conservation area either by careless picnickers on the river or jump across the river from the National Park it could travel very rapidly across the heath – grassland areas, particularly in a hot dry summer as we have just experienced. If it were to reach Toonang Drive it would accelerate up the steep heavily timbered Shearwater residential estate. There is only one road access to this estate and the residents would be trapped.

MODIFICATION TO ENABLE KEEPING OF CATS ON SITE

The fact that some 400 existing homes are able to keep cats if they so wish is no justification for this modification. Mistakes from the past should NOT be extended. The Federal Government has allocated \$300M in funding to eradicate cats from the islands around Australia with the intention of continuing the program on the mainland. King Island in Bass Strait has ruled to eradicate all cats including domestic. Recent research proves they are such a problem on farms in Victoria, Tasmania and King Island that they are causing massive losses to sheep flocks by abortion and birth defects caused by parasites in urine and faeces. These parasites are present in oats and hay stored in hay sheds that the cats frequent and this hay is then fed to the sheep. The full extent of this problem is as yet unknown. It may even have a similar consequence on indigenous species. This is aside from the obvious slaughtering of indigenous fauna, a DNA trait of felines.

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