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Director, Strategic Assessment
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
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**Middle Camp Residential Development (Southern Estates) - Middle Camp Southern Estates VPA, Potential State Significant Site (2010) & Concept Plan (MP10_0089)**

The National Trust makes the following comments on the proposal by Coal & Allied for its Southern Estates residential development proposal at Middle Camp, Catherine Hill Bay.

It is acknowledged in the Environmental Assessment that "the proposed Concept Plan seeks to facilitate residential development that is not permissible under the existing planning provisions and therefore a State Significant Site listing/rezoning is proposed under the Major Development SEPP, which will provide the statutory mechanism for approval of the Concept Plan and associated future development."

The National Trust objects on principle to the by-passing of long accepted local planning principles based on environmental studies and research through the Part 3(a) process, taking out of the hands of the local authorities decisions that should have been taken by them, at the local level.

The Trust welcomed the opportunity to meet with Coal & Allied representatives and their consultant to examine and better understand the proposal. A formal submission had been made by the Trust to the Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel in early 2008.

It is noted that the development proposal does respond to most of the findings of the Panel and follows the key principles set out in the Report dated 2 June, 2008.

However, there is one major exception in regard to the area behind the houses adjoining the eastern side of Flowers Drive and the land known as "Slack Alley" which was intended to be zoned E4 Environment Protection. This land falls within the Catherine Hill Bay Cultural Precinct. The IHAP stated: -

> "2. There should be no significant new development in the area shown on the attached principles plan as the "Catherine Hill Bay Cultural Precinct".

Consequently, the Trust is deeply concerned to see that this land is proposed for an increase in height to 6.5 metres. This site does not appear within the designated "development area" but its zoning E4 Environment Living Zone provides for "low impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values. This is contrary to the IHAP findings and the National Trust strongly urges that this zoning be changed to E2 Environment Conservation. The existing houses could be recognised under this zoning.

The National Trust supports the transfer of the Slack Alley land and its wetland to the Crown as a Crown Reserve Trust and understands that the local Progress Association may be prepared to take on the management of this land.

The Trust also supports a number of the development proposal's design principles including: -

- The proposed dedication of conservation land. Provision of 526.58 ha of 'conservation land' as an extension of the Wallarah National Park to the north and Munmorah State Conservation Area to the south.
- Enhanced recognition of the Heritage Railway.
- The establishment of riparian corridors along Middle Camp Gully and associated creeks
- Minimisation of the visual impact of the development to coastal foreshores and heritage settings and the maintenance of existing corridors and natural features where possible

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- The provision of public access through the proposed new development, conservation and archaeological heritage areas to the foreshore
- The provision for low scale coastal village development that is integrated with the natural landscape and setback appropriately from the coastal foreshore
- The maintenance and enhancement of the natural landscape setting of Catherine Hill Bay, and
- The maintenance of dwellings currently in the ownership of Coal & Allied which have heritage value.

Yours sincerely,

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