

Jo Durand
9 Gamban Rd
Gwandalan NSW 2259

16th December 2010

Director of Strategic Assessments
Department of Planning
Via email dorna.darab@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir,

Re: State Significant Site and Concept Plan Proposal – MP 10_0084 Gwandalan

I object to this proposal for the following reasons:

1. Poor planning

a. The **Draft North Wyong Shire Structure Plan** (Draft NWSSP) includes the Coal & Allied proposal and places it in the Long-term category in the Staging Plan. This category's timing is dependant on a range of factors, including 'the state of the economy and the market, and the demand for additional housing and employment land' (p32). The Draft NWSSP prioritises the Warnervale Town Centre, the Warnervale Employment Zone and parts of Wadalba, Woongarra and Hamlyn Terrace, which is to be developed in the coming years (short-term). The Draft NWSSP next priorities areas around Warnervale and Wadalba (medium-term), which will be developed 'when Government and Council can afford to provide key infrastructure and services to support their development' (p32). The long-term priority of the Draft NWSSP is 'land that is expected to be zoned for development after areas identified for medium term development' (p32). The long-term category has been assigned to this proposal by Coal & Allied, and if the Department follows its own planning definitions, this project should not be coming up for discussion for some years yet.

b. **Regional Strategies:** the Lower Hunter and the Central Coast Regional Strategies both contain Gwandalan as being significant in contributing 'affordable housing' for those areas. It is my belief that Gwandalan is only included in the LHRS because it provides a monetary gain for Coal & Allied shareholders when considered in total with its other landholdings in the LHRS area. It provides little to no benefit to the Lower Hunter in terms of housing stock and provides a massive negative in terms of destruction of 60ha of quality bushland on the last undeveloped bay in Lake Macquarie. In relation to the CCRS, the Gwandalan proposal still offers no benefits to housing stock as it doesn't comply with good planning criteria, eg:

- i. Near existing town centres;
- ii. Within 800 meters of reliable public transport;
- iii. Close to high schools; and
- iv. Close to work opportunities

The only reason this proposal is being considered is free land for the NSW Government for conservation. It's my opinion that it would be more

environmentally credible for Coal & Allied if ALL of the land is returned to the government for conservation – profits have already been extracted from the coal below ground. There is no real NEED for houses to be built on this land, there is, however, a real NEED for biodiversity in the form of trees and natural habitat for a variety of flora and fauna.

- c. **There needs to be a proper timeframe** attached to this proposal – there is no certainty in the ‘long-term’ category in the Draft NWSSP, as it was been said at the information session at Wyong Council earlier this month that the category in the Draft can be amended if the proposal is approved before the Structure Plan is approved. This is not acceptable – why is one landowner’s desires more important than a whole community’s desires?
 - d. **Demand** – the issue of housing demand in Gwandalan is the elephant in the room. It is one of the criteria for development, yet anyone can walk around town and see the number of properties for sale, the number of unsold properties in the last land release of 5 years ago, and the number of houses that are presently holiday homes and have the potential of becoming permanent residences. Of course, the proposal for Lakeside Living’s lots at the other end of Gwandalan which, when approved, will add another 160-odd houses to the mix. Why then, is it so important that this proposal be approved now? Is it so the proponent can sell it on – with a development approval attached, the land becomes so much more valuable. This is not good planning – this is pandering to a landholder’s shareholders.
2. **Mine subsidence** – it makes no sense to build homes on land that is still subject to coal extraction. Selling a home that carries the probability of mine subsidence, the possibility of repairs after protracted legal wrangling is a poor housing strategy. Mining has limited buildings to single storey construction over a large area of the site and buildings with large footprints will need to be articulated or split into several separate structures. No new homeowner will thank the Department for allowing mining to be continued under their new home. Conclude the mining, rehabilitate the land if necessary and hand it back to the government for conservation.
 3. **Preservation of Trees** – there is much discussion about carbon sinks and offsetting carbon emissions from the power stations nearby. Removal of Coastal Plain Scribbly Gum trees and undergrowth will result in much pollution not being captured. Why plant more trees in other areas, when there are mature trees already in place? Further, removal of the mature woodland trees would expose the wetland trees to wind - they will be damaged and possibly die.
 4. **Loss of vegetation** – habitats for marsupials and owls will be lost. Birds and animals that use the woodland corridors to travel will have their food source removed. Animals don’t follow human-made arrows of movement and the increase in traffic will also impact on the wildlife moving about. The removal of the protected *Angophora Inopina* near Kanangra Drive and then the loss of extra trees because of the change in hydration patterns and edge effects are of great concern. The loss of the heath under the Coastal Plains Scribbly Gums, the

destruction of rare and endangered orchids and the protected *Tetratheca juncea* is unacceptable and untenable. THE LANDS IN TOTALITY NEED TO BE PRESERVED.

5. **Crangan Bay is the last undeveloped bay in Lake Macquarie** – this should be seen as something to be proud of – not an unrealised opportunity for more profiteering. It should be preserved for the future of this area and we should be proud custodians of this preservation. Crangan Bay will be irreversibly impacted by run-off from the housing estate. The proposal acknowledges that the measures it proposes will not totally prevent impacts on the wetlands or the bay. This is not acceptable.
6. **Foreshore is best protected by no development** – it makes no sense to say that the lake foreshore will be protected by this proposal. No extra bushland should be considered to be removed to facilitate access to the foreshore.

I request that the proposal be assessed on its planning merits and not just what the government and the developer can gain from it. I hope that a Planning Assessment Panel is appointed to look at this proposal, along with that dealing with Catherine Hill Bay and Nord's Wharf. I also believe that the Voluntary Planning Agreement is a dressed-up 'land bribe' and for that reason it should be scrutinised by a PAC.

Thank you for making the documents provided by Coal & Allied available and for the opportunity to provide comment. I hope that good planning sense prevails and this land is preserved for generations to come.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JDurand'.

Ms Jo Durand