

The Committe Manager,
Standing Committee on Public Works,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
Sydney, NSW 2000.

May 15 th 2005.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re; Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision in Coastal Growth Areas.

Preface.

I have just received, as a result of my telephone enquiry, information on the above inquiry. I have been granted an extension of time for my submission. Even so, as I will be away from home this coming week I have had very little time to prepare my submission. I am simply making some general introductory remarks and sending copies of some submissions I have made to some of the numerous inquiries relating to development along the Central Coast.

I, and many other residents, are dismayed by the ad hoc way changes have been allowed to proceed along the parts of the coast that I am familiar with, the Central Coast south of Wyong. To many of us this development seems to be out of control, or in the control of developers and other financial interests. We are also concerned about the number of so called studies, public consultations and expensive brochures produced that seem to have resulted in few, if any, policies or changes in the interest of existing residents, or indeed, of future residents.

About myself.

1. I have been a resident of Gosford for 6 years.
2. I am directly affected by many of the development changes that are going on all over the Central Coast. Many of these have resulted in problems and a reduction in living standards for myself and for others, long term residents in particular.
3. I am directly affected by some specific consequences of development within in my local area in Gosford, and there are more changes to come. Most of these changes give cause for concern for the community, and some for me as an individual. Trying to deal with some of these matters I have learnt something of the administrative processes, as practiced on the Central Coast, for regulating development and population increase.

2.

4. I am retired.

5. I have a particular interest in the social aspects of population change on the Central Coast, in part because this aspect of development seem to have been consistently overlooked when it comes to making decisions. In fact the means, in particular the legal means to enforce social considerations in development is largely lacking. We have enforceable regulations about the outside of buildings but not about the social consequences of development. There is a great need for the consideration of the social factors of development and for regulations that are enforceable in order to avoid creating situations that will result in social problems in the future. (See my letter to the Land & Environment Court I am awaiting a reply.)

6. A reason for my particular interest of the social impact and future consequences of the rapid changes on the Central Coast is that I have qualifications in sociology and social anthropology.

Call for submissions.

1. How has this study been publicised to local organisations and interested individuals.?

My local Progress Association knew nothing about it: nor did those Progress Associations that I have been able to contact. Notices in the local paper are simply not enough to get the interest of people.

I submit that it is of very great importance in a study such as this who is notified and the composition of the sample supplying information.. It is easy to get the wrong impression of community views by not having a representative sample. eg one study that claimed to have community views about Gosford CBD when in fact had only the views of business people.

2. The 5 points listed on the sheet are familiar in Gosford.. So many studies and expensive glossy reports have been written covering these same points, but the local community has not benefitted . but all have been out of date before they have been written.

3. The material sent to me gives no indication as to how the information gained from the submissions will be used in practical terms. What benefits will it bring to residents in terms of action? This needs to be stated clearly, and evaluations made.

4. I submit that the information being sought now should have been sought at the time the F3 was being planned. And plans made accordingly. Today and into the future we have a very expensive remedial job to do because of past mistakes and lack of planning and

preparation. Prevention is always better than cure.

Inquiry Overview.

1. §2. The statements contained here illustrate very well that the complete and utter neglect and consideration of the views of the population existing prior to the F3. (A convenient frame of reference.) The original residents lived here because they enjoyed a quiet, relaxed way of life with uncrowded roads, enough facilities, water etc. The only thing missing was enough jobs so that too many people had to work in Sydney. What they wanted was jobs not people, and that is still the case today.

Developers and developer organisations call their way of life 'stagnation' in derogatory terms. But most of the pre F3 residents would have been happy to stagnate and maintain their relaxed life style. They are the forgotten people. Roads and trains are now overcrowded, water, doctors, nurses, schools, jobs are in short supply, bus services inadequate. Rates have gone up and people have been forced to sell up, and there is little low cost housing available. All this could have been anticipated and planned for in advance, or better still avoided all together.

I submit that on the Central Coast there is no longer a life style that is either relaxed or affordable for the majority.

3. New towns with the infrastructure in place before houses and industry go in should have been planned and constructed for the new population. And it should have been in areas such as near Newcastle where there is an adequate water supply. Residential and commercial development should be integrated and not ad hoc and piecemeal.

CONCLUSIONS AND QUESTIONS.

1. Plans made now will need to be catch up in the first instance, as well as looking to the future. Both are needed URGENTLY.

2. Plans need to be more scientifically based. This is particularly true, but not exclusively, for the social factors involved. The following are some of the topics which I suggest need to be scientifically/sociologically studied as part of the information required to understand some of the social issues involved in the changing population structure of the East Coast.

(i) The views, needs and fears of existing long term residents, and what they want for the future. Studies should include acceptable sampling methods. This would include business owners as a separate category.

4.


(ii) The incoming population. Where will it come from and why. What needs will it bring. What needs will it supply Social, economic, physical. Is it affected by immigration directly or indirectly?

(iii) The recently arrived population. Who are they, why have they come. Are their needs, social, economic being met. How have they affected the existing population, the physical and social environment etc. What do we know about the environment they came from?

3. Lets do it better in the future, and do town planning before rather than after the event. Lets provide all types of life style , modern and laid back, for rich and for poor, with infrastructure before people, and addressing social as well as economic needs. Lets have new towns and suburbs where water is available and commercial and residential development being integrated.

4. Lets have fewer studies and plans claiming public consultation, and more action based on the social and economic needs of present and future residents rather than dormant plans, or plans providing for the economic needs of a few, most of whom do not nor will be, living in the areas covered by the plans.

Yours faithfully.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J.D. Johnstone', written in dark ink.

J.D. Johnstone, Ph.D.,

PO Box 384,
Woy Woy,
NSW 2256.

C.C.

Department of Urban Affairs and Planning,
G.P.O. Box 3927,
Sydney, NSW 2001.

June 2nd 2000.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Shaping the Central Coast.

I am responding to your invitation for comments from residents of the Central Coast on the impressive document that you have put out entitled *Shaping the Central Coast* detailing a strategy for the development of the Central Coast over the coming 25 years. Unfortunately it is only very recently that this document came into my hands, which explains in part why I am so late in sending you these comments which I hope you will find challenging. I have attended one workshop on the topic of the Strategy, a topic which interests me very much as a resident, albeit a relatively recent resident, as a member of the Koolewong & Point Clare-Tascott Progress Association, and as a sociologist and urban anthropologist.

The Strategy does cause me some concern, more for what it leaves out than for what it puts in; and for its approach to the Central Coast as a metropolitan unit.

THE POPULATION.

I began my appraisal of *Shaping the Central Coast* by considering the make up of the current population of the Central Coast. In the absence of any survey or statistics as to the make up of this population, (if there is one it has not come to my knowledge) I can only state in general terms that we have a higher than average proportion of elderly and retired residents and a lower than average of top management and professional people. That a high proportion of working people living on the central coast are long distance commuters, mainly to Sydney, and that these commuters are made up of two types, namely those who want to live on the Central Coast but cannot find suitable employment on the Coast, and those who would like to live in Sydney but find it cheaper to live on the Coast and commute to Sydney. It should also be mentioned that some homes on the Coast are week-enders for people who live and work in Sydney.

I recognize that these different sections of the community may have different, and sometimes contradictory priorities for development. The Strategy, as I read it, does not allow for this. Nor does it suggest what the characteristics of the new population that it predicts will be coming to live on the Central Coast, (pp 4,7), or why they will be coming. Are they being

pushed from somewhere else, and why, or pulled to the Central Coast? I can see no references to research into this topic on pages 32-34. There is however a large amount of sociological literature on the topic of migration; migration between societies and within a society. Isn't this background information on which strategies should be at least partly based upon, if we are to meet their needs and wishes of existing residents? (p.5). And also allow for incoming new residents of the area?

METROPOLIS.

Currently The Central Coast is not, I submit, a characteristic metropolis; nor do I believe that many of its current residents wish it to become one. They are not looking to a second Gold Coast for the future!!! Nor do they wish to become a dormitory suburb of Sydney. Here I refer to elderly residents,, residents who live and work on the Central Coast because they like the life style here, and those commuters who would prefer to work on the Coast if only they could find suitable employment here. These, I suggest, are the residents that social and economic strategies for the future should aim to accomodate.

In these circumstances I would question the use or implementation of 'broad metropolitan principles'(p.5) as cited in the Strategy document. Interestingly on the following page the distinctiveness of the Central Coast is stressed. I find there is a conflict within the strategy in this respect. The Strategy, it seems, both aims to preserve the Central Coast's distictive character while at the same time treating it as a metropolis.(pp6,7.)

In particular I take issue with the comment on p.7. 'This trend towards dispersed settlements with seperate places to live, work and shop is not effective and must be reversed.' Surely this is one of the distictive charsacteristics of the Central Coast and offers, for those who wish it, a life style different to that of a Sydney or Newcastle suburb?

In the next paragraph it is stated 'People need a choice of houseing type.....'. This chalice already exists on the Coast, the main problem occurs , in this respect, is when local councils permit the construction of 2 storey houses, or the addition of second storey, in residential areas where bungalows are the predominate type of home. The question I would like to raise is how is the Strategy justified in claiming that people need a choice of dwellung type but not a choice of settlement type?

Finally, on this topic, I would suggest that having residential areas close to business and industrial premises brings many problems for both residents and businesses. I have

personal experience of some of these problems. And in any event many of the people working in the business or industries are not residents of the nearby housing settlement. They come from all over the Central Coast.

DEFEATISM.

I find the Strategy to be defeatist in approach, in that it assumes that the wish of the majority of residents, that the rapid population increase of the past 5 years or so, (p.6) should cease, is not *the* objective, or even *one* objective, of the development strategy presented. Why so? Particularly as many of the problems that your strategy deals with would be either eliminated or reduced, if the population increase were to slow down or cease. And are not these the people that the strategy is, or should be, serving? *Shaping the Central Coast* as I read it, takes no account of this fact and simply assumes that the current trend will continue unabated regardless of the wishes of the majority of local people who, incidentally, *are not developers!!*. *And it probably will unless steps are taken to try and reverse the trend.* But there is no strategy for this in *Shaping the Central Coast*.

I understand that the reason for this approach is that town planners and people in related professions have no strategies or techniques for stemming the type of migration we see currently coming to the Central Coast. I would challenge this, but if it is indeed true, I would suggest that rather than taking a solely negative approach in this regard, we should be looking to find, develop and use strategies and techniques aimed at reducing the flow of people to the Central Coast. The strategies outlined in the document *Shaping the Central Coast* could be used concurrently with the main aim of slowing down the population increase, as a supplement or back up

If indeed the profession of town planning, which has now been in existence for more than 20 years, has no such knowledge of techniques or strategies to discourage people from coming to live in a specific geographical location I would humbly suggest that the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning seriously consider sponsoring two post-graduate students in Town Planning, Social Geography or Sociology to do research specifically on this topic, with particular reference to Greater Metropolitan Region, Sydney Basin. It seems that there is an **URGENT** need for such research.

They might also consider the matter of raising land and house prices without concurrently raising rates and rents. I know something like this was considered for Paddington, Brisbane, but I am not sure that it was implemented. (This was not for the purpose of deterring new

residents into the suburb.)

COMMUTING

Commuters make up a considerable proportion of the working population of the Central Coast. Unfortunately I can find no studies of the exact proportion, just as I can find no studies of the social and economic effects of long distance commuting. The Strategy envisages new urban development along the railway line, which facilitates commuters travelling to Sydney or Newcastle to work. Such commuters will need to catch trains before 7a.m. to get to work and are unlikely to get home before 7.30 in the evening.

What effect does such hours of travel daily have on both the individual and the family? Could there be any relationship between long distance commuting and the high teenage suicide rate existing for the Central Coast? Children who in their youth may have had only minimal contact with one, or both, parents? I think we need to know.

ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

The word sustainable came up many times at the workshop but in practical terms I am still not sure precisely what it means in relation to development strategies or plans. I suspect it means different things to different people.

While I have in these comments stated my concern that the Strategy contains no reference to the need to stem the rate of population growth this is not to imply that I reject what is being offered in the document *Shaping the Central Coast*. There is no doubt that even with strategies in place and in action there is likely to be some increase in population and indeed problems already exist that are the consequence of an increased population. I suggest that we need a combined approach.

I humbly suggest that a strategy to slow down the population increase, a strategy that involves not only the Central Coast itself but also the source(s) from where the new residents are coming, should be a vital and integral part of an ecologically sustainable development strategy for the Central Coast. And if we don't have the tools to implement such a strategy we must develop them ourselves.

ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION.

I suggest of vital importance will be the order in which the strategies laid out in the

document are carried out. For example the internal road system is inadequate to deal with the current population yet Councils continually aggravate the congestion on the roads by approving more and more housing development. I suggest it should be roads first and housing and jobs afterwards.

As I understand it the responsibility of implementing most of the items in the Strategy will lie with the two local councils in the area. Consequently I would suggest that in the final document some guidance should be given as to the order in which the different items in the Strategy should be carried out. Indeed some are already underway; others have not yet been provided for.

CONCLUSION.

While I endorse the bulk of the Strategy in the document *Shaping the Central Coast* I draw attention to what I deem to be some serious omissions and possible contradictions. In particular I ask why such a negative approach has been taken in respect to matter of an increase in population for the area.

I would ask the Department of Urban affairs to think more positively upon this topic and to give more consideration to preserving the *distinctiveness* of the Central Coast while looking at the means available for regulating human migration toward and within the Greater Metropolitan Region.

Yours faithfully,

J, Johnstone, Ph.D.,

P.O. Box 3054,
Erina NSW 2250.

The Hon. Dr. Andrew Refshauge,
Minister for Urban Affairs & Planning,
Level 9, St. James Centre,
111 Elizabeth Street,
Sydney, NSW 2000.

March 21st 2002.

Dear Dr. Refshauge,

Re: Planning and Development on the Central Coast.

I recently watched and recorded an item on the ABC programme 'Stateline' in which the role of Local Councils and the NSW State Planning policies in the suburbs of Sydney. During this programme you made several statements of current NSW policy relating to development in the Sydney suburbs. One of these policies was that no development would be permitted unless essential services and infra-structure were already in place. Another was that you did not pressurize councils into carrying out the States preconceived policies relating to development; you worked with Councils, except for one which had chosen not to co-operate.

Having seen this programme I couldn't help wondering why we, on the Central Coast, could not have the same approach in respect to our development? The more so, because the State Government seems to be hell bent on turning the Central Coast into one large dormitory suburb of Sydney; not for the benefit of Central Coast residents, but as a means of alleviating Sydney's problems, regardless of the fact we already have problems here as a result of what has already been done. We need existing problems remedied rather than having problems exacerbated, as is happening at present.

I would like to ask you why, if no new developments are to be permitted in Sydney without adequate infrastructure and services being in place, why does this not apply to the Central Coast where development of residential land is progressing at a rapid rate without adequate road, water supply and sewage facilities to meet present demands? At last plans are in place to expand the hospital, but nurses, doctors and specialists are not here in sufficient numbers to meet the demand for their services. It remains to be seen whether the new hospital will be sufficient to meet the new demands if the State's current plans are carried out. And whether enough staff will be found to service it.

Why are Central Coast residents treated as second class citizens compared to the residents of Sydney?

What the residents of the Central Coast want, and their Councils are aware of this, are more jobs in the local area, better roads WITHIN the area; more doctors and nurses together with the facilities that attract them including private school places for their children; to be able to maintain a more relaxed style of life than is possible in Sydney; and more parks and green areas.

What, I ask you, is wrong with facilitating such an approach? Shouldn't people be able to make such a choice? Is there anything undesirable about such a plan, except perhaps for the developers who have flocked to the area and many of whom have no commitment to the area other than making money? Commuting daily to Sydney hardly seems conducive to a happy family life.

I would like to commend to you the approach used in many overseas countries of constructing new towns, with the infra-structure put in place first, in areas where currently few people are living or working and where there is either already an adequate water supply or one is put in place before industry and housing is put in place. This, among other things, avoids the need to resume land and properties, for the construction and widening of roads or railway lines etc. Something which can cause great distress for small businesses and residents..

Hoping you will find these comments constructive and helpful,

Yours faithfully,

J.D. Johnstone, Ph.D.,
P.O. Box 3054,
Erina, Nsw 2250.

cc B. Brogden.

3-1r.

Minister,
Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources,
GPO Box 3927, Sydney,
NSW 2001.

January 31st 2004.

Dear Sir,

Re: The need for social planning in relation for development applications.

It has been suggested to me by some of the people I have been consulting when preparing a submission in relation to a proposed very large residential development in Gosford that I should send a copy of this submission to you. This I am now doing because, I respectfully submit, there seems to be a gaping hole in the requirements imposed for developments of this nature. I would like to draw your attention to this.

I base my comments largely on the knowledge and information that I have gained in respect to one particular development application in Gosford and upon the publication and workshop that I attended in relation to the study "Shaping the Central Coast".

Due to limitations of time and health I was not able to present my submission in the way I would have liked. I apologise for its deficiencies but I think the message will be clear to you. We have the RTA with their specialists looking at the possible traffic impact of proposed developments; we have Fisheries looking at the possible effect on off shore waters; but no specialists examining the social impact on the immediate neighbourhood, the wider community, or on those who will be using the development whether for residential or commercial use. I would suggest that the sorry state of Gosford today is to a large degree due to the lack of such considerations in the past.

Shaping the Central Coast shows little evidence, to my thinking, of having had specialist consideration to local or Central Coast social issues when the plans were constructed. The workshop I went to had its topics for discussion pre-determined, giving little opportunity for the introduction of social issues. I did make a substantial submission but I was very new to the Central Coast at that time.

I trust you will find my submission interesting reading and useful. Avoiding social breakdown is difficult because of competing interests. The consequences of lack of social planning can be disastrous for individuals and society. Development of any large size is bound to have social implications which need to be looked at before plans are approved.

In ending, one thing I ask, please do not say that it is all up to the local Council. **THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE.** It is the Land & Environment that has the final decision, but consideration of the social environment does not appear to feature strongly in their decisions, at least not the ones I am familiar with, nor in the view of the community.

Yours faithfully,

J.D. Johnstone, Ph.D.,
PO Box 3054,
Erina, NSW 2250.

Councillor M. Brookes,
Gosford City Council,
PO Box 21,
Gosford, NSW 2250/

March 2nd 2004.

Dear Councillor Brookes,

Having read your comments, cited in the Express Advocate, about the consequences of using land that was zoned commercial for residential purposes, I thought that you might be interested in this submission to Council in respect to DA 20254. I regret that due to time restrictions, ill health and other commitments the presentation leaves a lot to be desired but I am hoping the message is loud and clear.

Although the comments made are in respect to this particular development proposal they are also appropriate for some Gosford other residential projects, particularly those for the CBD.

I have found that when it comes to considering the social and health implications of much of the development going on in NSW today there seems to be a vacuum. I can find no statutory body with the responsibility of seeing that social and health factors are given the consideration that they should have.

It seems incredible to me that the NSW Government includes a body to legislate on the impact of the outside of new buildings but no Government body to legislate on the social implications for residents, both for those who will be living within these new buildings, and for those residents already living in the neighbourhood of such buildings.

In the absence of such a body where, I ask myself, does the Land & Environment Court look in order to evaluate such effects when it makes rulings in respect to planning and development?

I have sent a copy of this submission to the Mayor, for his information.

Yours faithfully,

J. Johnstone,
PO Box 3054,
Erina, 2250.

General Manager,
Gosford City Council,
PO Box 21,
Gosford 2250

August 28th 04.

Dear Sir,

Attention: Annie Medicott. 19/7/04. Planning Controls for Gosford City Centre.

I have attended the workshop held on August 5th 04 and studied the draft plans on display at the Council's Administration Building. I have a number of concerns about these plans on both a general level and in regard to some specific proposals.

GENERAL REMARKS.

1. Objectives.

The document handed out at the workshops states 'that the aim of the review, (of the planning controls for Gosford City Centre was:

- *to facilitate the development of Gosford City Centre as an attractive regional capital that:
- *complements the City's waterfront location; and
- *provides a range of services and facilities and cultural and social activities, within an economically sustainable climate.

These objectives raise a number of issues which I will be considering in the course of this submission. At this point I would like to ask two questions:-

- (1) Do the people of the Gosford Council area want to have their city centre turned into a regional capital, and if so, at whose expense financially and environmentally? And if not.....?
- (2) Do the people and Councils of the other Shires of the Central Coast want to have Gosford as their regional capital?

For myself I find I do not have the answers to these questions; has a survey been done? I do think it is wise not to be concentrating on trying to turn the City Centre into a tourist attraction. The cost to the ratepayer would be too great.

2.. A co-ordinated approach.

I suggest that these plans should be viewed according to town planning principles as being simply one aspect of the total development of the Gosford City Council area.

In fact, there is no "city" of Gosford but rather a number of pockets of residential, commercial and rural areas with a single industrial area in the West Gosford/Somersby area. I look at the plans for the "City Centre" in that light. I look to see how it is integrated with the rest of the area rather as a separate development unit. I submit when we look around the Council area we see how we are suffering the consequences today of piecemeal, un co-ordinated development over the years.

Unfortunately the plans as currently presented give no indication of such co-ordinated planning, of how the changes to the City Centre proposed will provide for the needs of the Council area as a whole, or solve or alleviate existing problems.

2.

It is difficult to assess the value and/or benefits of the proposed new planning controls without a concurrent proposal for changes to the road system, the water supply and sewage systems, the rail service, and other services both within and without the proposed city centre.

When these issues were raised at the workshop I attended we were told that Council would not, at least in respect to water, would not grant the proposed changes until these have been adequately dealt with. I would submit that Council's record in this respect is not encouraging. In view of the fact that it will take many years and much money before the the current demand on these essential services will be adequately met for the existing population I would ask **WHY AT THIS TIME ARE WE CONSIDERING CHANGES IN ZONING THAT WILL INCREASE, NOT DECREASE, THE DEMAND FOR THESE SERVICES?**

As I understand the NSW building regulations once land is rezoned there is no legally mway to stop the IMMEDIATE development if the owner so wishes. Fro this reason I submit that **NO RE ZONING BE UNDERTAKEN UNTIL WE HAVE PLANS AND FUNDING FOR ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE,AND WATER** to meet the needs which will occur as a consequence of development of the city centre and elsewhere in the Gosford City Council area. Past Councils have a bad record in this respect.

3. For whose benefit should the CBD be designed for?

We are told that the planning proposals being presented were drawn up in consultation with business people. Consequently the plan needs to be analysed with this fact in mind, the more so because, firstly business interests may conflict with some of the objectives of the review, and secondly because business men comprise a minority of the residents and rate payers in the community.

Business, surely, should be for the purpose of providing for the needs of people, not vice versa. If people no longer wish to use a businees then I suggest it is time for the business to move on. Have surveys been carried out to determine (a) why people do not come to the city centre, and (b) for what purpose(s) do thos that do come come

4. Suitability of the site for the objectives stated.

I consider the designers of the plan to have been very wise in not having as its prime objective turning the CBD into a tourist attraction.It just does not have the potential for this because:- (i) the main commercial areas is too far away, and seperate from, the coastal strip, and
(ii) there is a busy through road forming a barrier between the coast and the CBD..

5. The sequence of events relating to the proposed re-zoning.

In respect to urban development the order in which changes or implemented is often more important than the actual changes themselves. No discussion of this was included in the workshop. While it is important to have a plan in mind prior to making changes to the roads, water supply, electricity supply, sewage collection, medical services, these need to be planned for and financed before re-zoning is done. Once re-zoned, building heights permitted changed, land sold on this basis,it is difficult to change them. Re-zoning sholuld come late in the day.

SPECIFIC POINTS.

I submit that as the proposal now stands the consequences for Gosford and its people

would be disastrous. Disastrous for the existing population and disastrous for the people who come to live in the new residential blocks being proposed. These are several reasons for my suggesting this.

1, Traffic, roads and parking..

It is difficult to assess the adequacy of the proposed road system within the CBD without the knowledge of any proposed changes, if any, to the traffic system outside the area covered by the CBD. I submit that the currently proposed changes need to be made dependant upon :- (a) a ring road to the west of the City centre so that through traffic has an adequate route to by-pass the city centre, and,

- (b) an adequate alternative road for traffic from the F3 and West Gosford to The Entrance Road near the Avoca Drive turn off in order to reduce the amount of traffic, particularly heavy traffic, along the foreshore at Gosford and up the hill at York Street.

I appreciate that these alternative routes will very likely be State roads, but I respectfully submit that if the State of NSW intends that the Central Coast increases its population density, against the wishes of the existing population I might add, then it will need to meet its responsibilities, which, among other responsibilities, means providing adequate through road to provide adequate traffic flows.

(a) Western ring road.

If RACECOURSE ROAD is to be used as a ring road to the west of the city centre something will need to be done to remove the bottle neck at the inter-section of Racecourse Road and Showground Road that occurs during term times when students from the two adjacent secondary schools are arriving or leaving school. The southern side of the inter-section lies within the city centre boundary but there is no indication as to any changes that might be made to the inter-section. Also can we assume that when the Gosford Hospital development is completed there will be no need for cars to park in Racecourse Road opposite the Hospital? I would also suggest that there should be no development along the Road until plans have been finalised for its update.

(b) Internal Roads.

I suggest that those sections of Henry Parry Drive and Mann Street that go through the commercial area of the city centre should be made one way streets, in opposite directions, and the inter-connecting streets also be one way streets in alternating directions. This should allow for the widening of pavements, if desired, and permit a better flow of traffic.

(c) Donnison Street and Donnison West Street.

After careful examination of the plans provided it seems that under the proposed plans these streets will no longer be joined by a bridge of the railway. If this is correct traffic coming from West Gosford and beyond would have to enter and/or leave the city centre via Dane Drive and add to the congestion along the southern end of Mann Street. This, I suggest, would be undesirable.

(d) Parking.

Parking, or the lack of it close to shops and offices, is an important deterrent for people who might otherwise come to the city centre. In today's modern World the presence or absence of sufficient well positioned car parks can make or break a commercial or business area.

The LEP being presented does not seem to specify whether any areas in the city centre will be designated, zoned, for car parking. I suggest that several small car parks, covered if

4.

possible, would be more convenient than one large car park.

(e) Pedestrians.

I understand that Council has already approved a WALKWAY between the Hospital and the railway station but this does not appear on the plans.

I would like to see that under the DCP there should be plans for a number of covered ARCADES or passageways between the blocks of commercial buildings. These would help to reduce the distances that people would need to walk when doing a variety of shopping, recreational activities etc within the city centre. It would also provide them with shelter from the sun and rain, and take them away from the petrol and diesel fumes in the streets.

(2) A lack of focal point.

I find it a failing that the city centre as proposed seems to be lacking a clear focal point. A focal point, an open space, bounded with elegant buildings, with trees, gardens, landscaping.

A place for civic ceremonies, concerts and the like.

The foreshore is too far away from the business centre, a distance that will badly affect by the high buildings of Spurbest and the Leagues Club which, the audience at the workshop were horrified to find out, will be exempt from the plans and zoning to be applied to the rest of the CBD.

What are closer but currently go almost unnoticed are the two high, forested hills on the east and west side of the business area of the city centre. They are hidden behind buildings. It is claimed that the draft LEP and DCP "recognise the unique physical setting of Gosford." I fail to see how this is being done when they plan to have a spine of higher buildings along Mann Street. People are even less likely to be aware of, to experience the presence of these beautiful hills than they do currently.

A focal point, an open space that will permit a view, and therefore a presence, of these hills is needed to make Gosford city centre and attractive place.

Kibble Park has many disadvantages. It is cut off from Mann Street by commercial buildings the east side of which are singularly unattractive, as is the south side of Woolworths to the north of the Park. The Park is bisected by Eliza Street, and to the east the view of the Rumbalala Reserve by the market building. And it is very small, the more so if hundreds of people are to be living in the city centre.

I am puzzled by the comment in the material handed out where it lists the "Key features of the Public Domain Plan. These include "Civic Spine, and Kibble Park, and" Concepts only, for community discussion.

(3) The Library.

The library is presently situated in an inadequate building in Kibble Park.

There is some undecision as to whether it will remain there and be expanded or whether it will be moved to site on Mann Street, close to the Council buildings.

Surely this is a matter that should be an integral part of the proposals for the development of the city centre? It is important that the library is located in a convenient place with adequate parking

5.

(4) Concert Hall.

No mention of a concert hall was made at the workshop or in the plans. This seems an unfortunate omission as the concert hall is probably best situated in the city centre area. If Gosford is to become a regional capital this surely would be a central feature.

(5) Recreation & exercise Facilities.

In the interest of physical and mental health if it is intended to have a large residential population living in high density accommodation in the city centre adequate numbers of gyms, squash courts, basketball courts, swings and climbing frames, etc for casual sport and exercise will need to be available in, or adjacent to, each residential block. A swimming pool would also be an asset for this purpose. (I am not referring to organised, paid for sports facilities.)

(6) Exemptions from the proposed city centre plans.

Horror was expressed at the workshop I attended, and I support this horror, that two large buildings in the city centre should be exempt from the planning controls for the city centre.

CONCLUSIONS.

Regretfully I do not consider that the plans as submitted are adequate to fulfill some of the objectives that it set out to achieve. I suggest that this is largely because the site and buildings and street layout that currently exist are not suited, without large scale, and very expensive, bulldozing and replanning, for the making of an attractive city centre.

The problems are enormous, and aggravated by the fact that two large buildings near the foreshore are exempt from rezoning.

The plans seem disjointed in themselves and do not connect the business sector with the foreshore area. They are also disjointed in that they are not in anyway integrated with the development and needs of the rest of the Council area.

I submit that on no account should any re-zoning be done until there is an adequate supply of water for the entire Council area guaranteed, until sewage pipes and sewage disposal are known to be adequate for the entire Council area.

Until an adequate road system has been financed.

Until decisions have been made about the library and concert hall, and whether ratepayers want Gosford to become a Regional Centre.

That NO rezoning should take place until attempts have been made to ensure that the two exemptions to planning controls be removed.

Foot note.

When, as a consequence of rezoning land suddenly becomes more valuable, who benefits from the appreciation? And if it decreases in value, who bears the cost?

Yours faithfully,

J. Johnstone, PO Box 384, Woy Woy 2256

Senior Commissioner,
Land & Environment Court,
GPO Box 3565,
Sydney NSW 2001.

April 23rd 2005.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Information about the Land & Environment Court.

I am uncertain as to whom the questions below should be addressed. This in itself an indication that although those of the general community who are involved with D.A.s few of us have an understanding of the workings of the Land & Environment Court. This is unfortunate as its decisions have the potential to have far reaching consequences for our way of life.

I understand that there may be information about the Court on the Internet but many of us, myself included, do not have access to the Internet. I am wondering whether you have any brochures etc available for the public detailing the purposes of the Court and how it functions? And whether there is any appeal possible to decisions made by the Court?

Another, rather different question that concerns many people, is the question as to whether or not the Court in making its decisions re Development Applications is able to take into consideration social factors? I ask this because it seems that there are few, if any, NSW laws relating directly to the social consequences of building developments. I am assuming, perhaps incorrectly, that the Court has to base its decisions on existing NSW or Federal law.

I have been advised that it is the local Council's role to consider social factors when assessing D.A.s, and I am sure that they do. However, if they reject the Application and the matter goes to the Land & Environment Court, or if it is before the Court for any other reason, then, it seems to me, that social factors will not be considered in the making of the Courts decisions. This because there are no laws, or even standards, that they can refer to. Would I be correct in this? And if so, is this satisfactory in the view of the Court?

I can assure you that these matters are of concern not just to myself but to many other members of the community where I live on the Central Coast. Another concern is the cost for local Councils of cases that go to the Land & Environment Court. It seems that sometimes Councils have to accept D.A.s simply to avoid the cost of the Court if the Applicant decides to take this step.

Yours faithfully,

J.D. Johnstone,

PO Box 6171,
Gosford West,
NSW 2250