

The Lake
Macquarie Coastal
& Wetlands
Alliance



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

Dear Sir,

I am writing a submission to your committee on behalf of the LMC&WA, a group formed with the following objectives;

Ensure the ecological integrity of our coastal region's terrestrial, wetland and marine environments between Munmorah and Glenrock State Recreation Area;

Ensure controlled and managed access to the coastal region so that its natural assets will be available now and into the future, for Lake Macquarie residents and visitors;

We are concerned that the growth for this region does not seem to have the necessary emphasis on planning, a feature underscored by the Minister for the Hunter, Michael Costa's comments on the issue. We have also been advised that DIPNR has consulted with interested parties on the Lower Hunter regional Strategy before involving the public and even this involvement has been less than satisfactory.

In our opinion any growth involving the figures being contemplated, 90,000 new residents by the year 2025, should require a detailed examination of the requirements of a society that has to adjust to higher oil prices. The study should therefore examine the impact "peak oil" will have on employment, engineering works, transport, and agriculture as it will be desirable to have communities located near food production and employment regions to reduce transport costs. There should also be a parallel study on the impact on climate change in order to determine the regions that will no longer be suitable for living or for agriculture because of temperatures or water shortages.

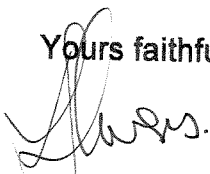
It would be logical to assume that infrastructure requirements needed to cater for this situation would have to include alternative transport systems, rail, light rail, and cycle/walk paths.

Figures for the projected age profile of the residents of this region in the time frame of the strategy suggest there will be a very high level of aged persons, partly due to the influx of Sydney retirees disenchanted with life in that city. This will mean a need for more aged care centres a process that will be very expensive as the necessary land is already in short supply. One way of alleviating this situation is to provide incentives for healthy living for our population, not just for the older generation but for the young, particularly with a view to reducing youth obesity which threatens to cost far more in health costs. Cycleways/walkways are not only ideal for this function they will also provide transport alternatives. Another multi functional concept for infrastructure improvement is communal gardens for those living in units without gardens. Gardening is not only a very healthy activity it can help supplement the food requirements of the city that will be faced with ever increasing prices for food as the fuel costs increase. .

Since the problems to be faced in the next few decades (Climate change as well as Peak Oil) are completely unique the government should adopt a precautionary principal and ensure that no existing infrastructure is lost by being submerged through residential development. This region is currently being threatened by the closure of two regional air ports, Cooranbong has been sold and Pelican airport at Belmont is closed pending possible sale,. This is a vital transport link and should be retained . The major airport at Williamstown has had its operations curtailed due to urban sprawl, a problem created by bad planning. Similarly the rail link into Newcastle should be maintained and new rail corridors installed. The area has also lost a TAFE site to housing development, several coal mines, and any industry that falters is considered as fodder for the housing industry despite an obvious need for employment in the future.

Lake Macquarie is in a poor situation to handle aged people as its new LEP did not allow any zoning or dedicate any land for this purpose. It is therefore vital to maintain existing aged care sites such as the one at Dudley where the site is currently being considered for residential development.

Yours faithfully,



Don Owers