

Roz Armstrong

**Soldiers Point
NSW 2317**

The Director
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/majpor-projects/project/12256

17 May 2021

To Whom It May Concern

RE: Major Project SSD 5916

As a resident of Port Stephens I write to object to the above major project for several reasons including:

- Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS), dewatering process and impact on ground water.
- Use of Temephos for mosquito control.
- Traffic Management
- Climate Change and Flooding
- Ecologically Sustainable Development
- Endangered Species
- Community Engagement

Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS), dewatering process and impact on groundwater

There is no ASS assessment as required only a referral to a sampling process. I am concerned about the proposed de watering process when it comes to run off with high metal concentrations the impact of this draining into groundwater dependent eco systems such as the into adjacent SEPP14 Wetlands.

In addition the ground water impact assessment report does not quantify the dewatering required for construction or the impact of this on neighbouring household bores. Similarly, it is silent on the impact of dewatering and

Use of Temephos for mosquito control.

The EIS recommends the use of temephos for mosquito control. This is an organophosphorous insecticide which is non-specific to mosquitos and has acute toxic effects on a wide variety of aquatic organisms. According to the Queensland Government Natural Resource Management Operational Policy, *"Its use in QPWS managed areas (including marine parks) should be generally prohibited except as a last*

resort. Clearly for a development posing as an eco-tourism facility to use a chemical of last resort is contrary to the definition of 'eco-tourism'.

Living with Mosquitoes on the Central Coast region of NSW, 2007 also notes that "*it [tempehos] is not totally selective for mosquitoes and may have toxic effects on non-target organisms such as birds, fish and some invertebrates - particularly in estuarine habitats.*" The idea of a hotel operator using a toxic and non-specific insecticide next door to a rural residential area, SEPP 14 Wetlands, Port Stephens Marine Park, and the estuarine Tilligerry Nature Reserve is unacceptable.

Traffic Management

.As a long term resident I am very familiar with the problems of egress from Soldiers Point to and from Newcastle which is via Port Stephens Drive and Nelson Bay Road.

The magnitude of increased traffic during construction will not only impact negatively on the condition of the road but also put lives of residents at risk as they negotiate huge increases in number and size of vehicles

Climate Change and Flooding

The DGRs (OEH attachment) require a sensitivity assessment of an increase on rainfall intensity of 10%, 20% and 30% due to climate change for the 1 in 100-year event in conjunction with the projected sea level rise. The EIS (page 59) has considered only the 10% increase, clearly indicating that the EIS is inadequate with respect to this aspect of the DGRs. The Community of Soldier's Point is acutely aware that Anna Bay is a crucial point of egress from the Tomaree Peninsula to Newcastle. Recent 1 in 100 rainfall periods has left residents with images of extensive flooding and memories of collapsed culverts and road closures, which are today, still inconveniencing residents' movement from their homes.

Ecologically Sustainable Development

I note that the EIS states that "*To ensure credibility as being a genuine eco resort the Project will demonstrate energy efficiency/sustainability using recognised and reliable rating systems such as NABERS and/or Green Star. Likewise, carbon neutrality will also ensure strong identifiable ESD outcomes*" Unfortunately the EIS goes on to state that a model will be completed later to see "*what may be realistically achieved for this type of development*". In other words, this critical test of project credentials has not been undertaken and therefore belies the nature of the entire 'Eco' project because

- there is no detailed energy assessment
- there is no guarantee of renewable energy usage – it is intended to explore the potential for solar panels (pg. 5 preliminary energy assessment)
- there is a recommendation to use a Green Star tool as a design guide, but no assessment is provided
- there is no energy modelling

- the bulk and scale of the hotel means that on-site water supplies cannot be sufficient

Given the above the critical test of the project's ESD credentials fails and the project should not be approved.

Endangered Species

The applicant admits that the development would involve a loss of secondary koala feed trees including 0.25ha of Melaleuca and 0.25ha of swamp oak forest. The EIS concludes that:

‘the loss of two hectares or less of marginal quality habitat critical to the survival (habitat score of 5) is highly unlikely to have a significant impact on the koala.’ (p.40)

Whilst this may not seem significant there is an increasing trend in our shire to remove Koala habitat in small sections. Any assessments must consider the cumulative impact of many small area habitat losses which has, in recent times been increasing despite the incremental loss of koala's from our reserves. A significant reduction in size of the project must occur if it is going to be considered so that this habitat can be retained.

Notwithstanding above comments about decrease in size, given the proponent fails to address a requirement from the DGRs (OEH attachment page 10) to consider the capacity for ecosystem migration due to projected sea level rises of up to 0.9m above 1990 levels. This project should not go ahead since if migration occurs as predicted the entire footprint of the hotel would be within Endangered Ecological Community which is of great value to the residents of Soldier's Point and indeed the entire Tomaree Peninsula.

Community Engagement

Whilst Chapter 4 of the EIS refers to Government agency engagement. The EIS is silent on community engagement. This is despite the clear requirement in the DGRs (page 6) to consult with affected landholders. I am advised that neither the proponent nor the EIS consultant has engaged with the obviously affected landholder or adjacent landholders, let alone the wider community including First Nations People, specifically local cultural heritage knowledge holders.

Given the above it is noticeably clear that community engagement in the full meaning of the phrase has not occurred. Leading me to believe that the statement in the EIS suggesting the consultant engaged with community groups is, at best, confusing and misleading and it cannot be said to be in the community's interest.

Summary

The Ports Stephens LEP (2013) which, amongst other things, defines an eco-tourist facility as

“a sensitively designed and located to minimise bulk, scale and overall physical footprint and any ecological or visual impact. “

Given the comments I have made in this submission I do not believe , in its current form, the project can be called an eco tourist facility , which is the only commercial development permitted on the site and should therefore be rejected.

Yours sincerely
Roz Armstrong
18th May 2021