

General Manager  
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Hunter and Central Coast  
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**Re: Draft Central Coast Regional Plan**

I am a plant ecologist (PIREL Lab, Macquarie University) who has been living and working on the Central Coast for the last four years. I consider the region's natural setting to be its key asset and believe that the Central Coast Regional Plan should strongly emphasise consolidation and growth of our environmental assets. I do not believe the draft plan provides enough emphasis on protection of the natural environment. Protection of areas with conservation value should be strengthened in the plan.

Specifically, I take issue with the lack of support (particularly in the draft summary) of the Gosford Coastal Open Spaces System (COSS) in the Draft Plan Summary. COSS represents a unique, massive ongoing investment and land acquisition programme which holds property of national environmental and cultural significance. To date this programme has been an outstanding success in economic, social and environmental terms. The abundance of pristine bushland brings both visitors and long term immigrants to the region who in turn drive growth in key sectors. The wild landscapes in COSS and the flora and fauna they support are part of the identity of people in the Gosford area. It is essential that support for COSS in the Regional Plan is explicit.

The regional plan should include the government commitment to introduce an E5 zone to be applied to COSS lands in public ownership. This must be fully implemented in the Regional Plan and gazetted at the same time that the Regional Plan is finalised.

The Regional Plan should also consider the possibility of extending the COSS system into the Wyong Region.

I also support the submissions of the Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales and the Community Environment Network.