

19 January 2017

Director Environment and Building Policy
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Director Environment and Building Policy:

RE: DRAFT COASTAL MANAGEMENT SEPP 2016

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INTRODUCTION

1. I am making this submission on behalf of myself, my wife, our two children, their spouses, and six grandchildren. Hopefully this submission will also benefit people of the Boomerang and Blueys Beach communities, the Forster Great Lakes area and the whole of NSW coastal communities.

BIG PICTURE ISSUES

2. Firstly, the Minister for Planning and his Department are to be congratulated on taking the initiative regarding coastal reforms. However, it is respectfully suggested that there are a number of negative aspects that should be modified and many positive aspects added to produce great coastal reforms.

NSW BEACHES ARE AMONG THE STATE'S GREATEST ASSETS.

3. The cities' beaches are well known however there are many more great beaches in country NSW. Some of these are world-renowned including Boomerang and Blueys Beaches. These are one of the State's greatest and most under-developed resources. Great beaches cannot exist in isolation without the support of great coastal communities. By and large, coastal country beaches and their communities have been taken for granted. They seem to have always been there. Without the initiatives of the owners of the original fishermen's shacks and original beach cottages and their subsequent owners, many coastal communities would not exist today.

4. My family has owned property in the Boomerang and Smiths Lakes area for the last thirty-six years. Twenty –five years ago we built our family home on Boomerang Beach. Over this period, like many others, we have invested one or more million dollars in the area in the

construction of two dwellings, in ongoing trades services and day-to-day living expenditure. Over the period, new support services have been introduced to the Great Lakes area which have brought a bigger labour force into the area, created new homes, business and job opportunities. Over this period, the residents of Boomerang and Blueys Beaches have materially contributed to the substantial growth of the Pacific Palms trade services and businesses and also to the Forster business community.

5. During the last thirty years we, and many other beachfront owners, have brought many hundreds of visitors from outside the area to enjoy our natural attractions. Many of these visitors have returned year after year and would have accounted for a very significant contribution to the local economy. A number of these visitors have since established their own homes and holiday places in Boomerang and Blueys.

6. We refer later in this submission to harsh requirements as to building improvements, modifications and the possible requirement to erect removable buildings to be set up on premier locations. This negative current and proposed approach has already resulted in significant property valuation losses to existing owners, with potential new owners and investors being turned away and all this based on theoretical, unsubstantiated data and assumptions as mentioned later in this submission. As a result there has been a downturn in business for local real estate agents. It has also resulted in valuations dropping in respect of beachfront properties by a significant twenty-five to forty percent.

7. Whilst this may seem to only affect beachfront owners, the losses experienced by them in capital values will have a future follow on effect as a lack of new construction, extensions, and

additions to beachside properties will directly affect local builders. This lack of activity will cause job losses to extend gradually to tradespeople and businesses. Over the longer period, beachfront communities will stagnate and gradually die.

8. What should be the answer to this potential long term downward spiral? Clearly the NSW Government should look at NSW regional beaches as a very significant growth opportunity for country NSW which will be missed if the unnecessarily restrictive requirements of the SEPP are not changed.

9. The approach must be to encourage significant investment and the development of the majority of NSW beaches and beach communities to make them 'Must Visit' tourist destinations and to become some of the best living and working locations in the world.

10. The NSW Government should be looking to provide every possible support to beachfront owners and must undertake to protect all of our valuable beaches. Such action to protect beaches and to encourage and support new sustainable business developments would create significant numbers of new jobs and prosperous businesses at a time when new economic activity is needed in the State to replace the reduction in revenue from the mining boom. The new activity would, in turn, provide new streams of revenue to councils and the State and Federal Governments and help fund the protection of the beaches.

11. Accordingly, the SEPP should be amended to include this new and very positive government approach.

COASTAL EROSION

12. Known coastal hotspots are already listed by the government. These are the areas where government and council money should be spent in protecting these beaches and supporting these communities.

13. Government money should not be wasted doing endless detailed studies of areas which are not at risk in the short and medium-term and which result in more restrictions and no benefits and are causing immediate and unnecessary concern to large numbers of coastal communities.

14. Rather than having local councils responsible for the study of coastal erosion, with under-qualified staff, and councilors who are not trained in this specialist area making decisions based on information given to them by their staff and not fully understood by them, the government should use money saved from cutting back on unnecessary immediate local research and use the funds to set up a new state-wide truly independent body. Using the most highly qualified specialist staff and using the latest specialised equipment to study trends affecting the whole of the relevant NSW coastline this body could come up with less-expensive, consistent and reasonable long-term plans acceptable to all stakeholders. To save duplication of effort, and to gain benefits, this body should also compare their work with the work being carried out by similar bodies in other states in Australia, and overseas and thereby achieve significant cost reductions.

15. Local councils would contribute local information available to them and within their sphere of knowledge to this independent body. Community groups should also be consulted during the conduct of this work. State Government, together with representatives from council and affected communities would then be responsible for approval of remedial coastal erosion work.

16. The NSW Government must not miss this significant opportunity to re-draft the rules to restore values, to take away the worries and concerns of many thousands of coastal residents who are currently unsure of their future.

OBJECTION TO SPECIFIC CLAUSES OF THE DRAFT COASTAL MANAGEMENT SEPP AND MAPS RELATING TO BOOMERANG AND BLUEYS BEACHES

17. Regardless of the timing and the implementation of any of the foregoing recommendations we make the following objections to the SEPP together with comments, in respect of Boomerang Beach and Blueys Beach as follows:

18. We request modification of draft SEPP clause 4 (2) to require evidence based maps - rather than current unqualified inclusion of existing LEP and DCP mapping.

19. We request removal of the Boomerang and Blueys (B&B) coastal vulnerability area map in the draft SEPP for reasons including

- the maps are based on a partial desk top study prepared by Worley Parsons (WP) in 2011
- WP state that the study was not adequate for planning or legislation purposes
- peer reviews by Professor Andrew Short (2012), Angus Jackson (2015 & 2016) and Angus Gordon (2014 to date) confirm that B&B are stable, accreting and embayed beaches between substantial rock headlands
- OEH photogrammetry 1953 to date confirms ongoing stability of the existing rock based B&B dune system
- major storms since the 1970s exposed beach areas of rock substrata but did not adversely impact on the B&B dune system. Beach sand returned naturally after each storm with continuing accretion

20. We recommend inclusion of a Planning Policy, within or associated with the draft SEPP, based on a hierarchy of coastal risks. This Policy should initially review designated coastal 'hot spots' and then provide a framework for available funds to be allocated to actual required priority works rather than further unnecessary and duplicate studies.

21. We object to draft SEPP clauses 13.2 and 13.3 and request review of the temporary housing provisions and inclusion of the above recommended hierarchy of risks.

22. We recommend inclusion of comprehensive social and economic impact commentary and criteria in the draft SEPP.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Darnell and family.