

**EAST DAPTO COMMUNITY
SUBMISSION
ON THE TALLAWARRA LANDS**

**SUBMITTED TO WOLLONGONG COUNCIL AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING N.S.W.
BY THE CONCERNED RESIDENTS OF EAST DAPTO
(CRED)**

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS SUBMISSION

The Tallawarra lands (approximately 660 hectares on the shores of Lake Illawarra) were in public ownership until sold to TXU which later became part of the China Light and Power company and was reformed to become TRUenergy. The sale of this public land was very cheap and this needs to be borne in mind when considering allowing a gross overdevelopment of this huge site considering its relationship to other development on the foreshores of Lake Illawarra, the stresses on the Lake, and the local need for preservation of green space.

The primary purpose of this submission from Concerned Residents of East Dapto (CRED) is to point out how audacious and ill conceived any suggestion is to put roads and houses over the northern part of the Tallawarra lands. This is the area known locally as the ‘Horse farm’ or ‘Elliot’s Riding School’, which has more recently been called Tallawarra Point by local people. It refers to the large sloping area of land north of the power stations coming down from Mt Brown and jutting out in a nose shape into the Lake Illawarra.¹ This land also borders on the houses in Wyndarra way, and on the Pony Club.

Housing on this area which we will refer to as Tallawarra Point is considered by the residents of the Illawarra to be very poor planning. We show that it does not meet reasonable planning expectations in the matters of over development and over rapid development of a huge site, transport, roads and traffic, noise, air quality deterioration, demands on limited resources, social services and facilities, sewerage, visual amenity, tourism, health of the Lake Illawarra, heritage and the natural environment.

This area² of 650 hectares is bigger than many whole suburbs in the Illawarra. It is approximately the same size as the entire East Dapto. Years of planning and provision would normally go into any such proposal e.g. years of pre planning for the future townships of West Dapto. Refer to Appendix Map 3 for relative dimensions. The people of Southern Wollongong and Shellharbour have not had adequate information, much less adequate consultation on the massive changes proposed here for the Lake, their social and visual environment and the effects on currently inadequate infrastructure.

The submissions put forward by TRUenergy are entirely focussed from within their company’s point of view. They have been unable to see the

¹ See Appendices Map 3.

² See Appendices Map 3

developments they want, in any balance between the place of the Tallawarra Lands and the surrounding communities and environment. Their maps show the outlook from within the property outwards, rather than back to the property from other viewpoints of residents around the rest of the lake foreshore suburbs. This submission hopes to fill this gap at least partially, as we cannot entirely represent the views of residents elsewhere around the Lake who will be impacted by the current proposed developments.

For our information, we have taken the documents produced by TRU, and those on the Wollongong City council website. They are listed in the References. We have also consulted residents and citizens groups throughout the Illawarra to get local history, technical advice and advice on infrastructure impacts.

The Sinclair Knight Merz Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report ³ states that its report is to be a briefing for

- The Department of Planning
- The Wollongong City Council
- Department of Environment and Conservation
- Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability

It is a briefing on what TRUenergy considers the key issues which should be included in the actual “Environmental Assessment Report” (EAR) which the above agencies will use to come up with their recommendations to go into the EAR which has to be provided to the Minister as part of the Project Application.

The key environmental issues in the report have been reduced to four and omit land use, flora and fauna, heritage, socio-economics, traffic, waste management, soils, surface water and groundwater.

These latter issues are important to the residents around the Lake, but as they are only minor in this report and as this progresses through the “Recommendations Committee” eventually they may be so minor that the Minister may not have to consider any of them.

The report of the Acting Manager City Strategy (JB) 15/3/07 to the Wollongong City Council Environment and Planning Committee⁴ states

“Consultation feedback from the Koonawarra community has indicated that the community values the scenic quality of the northern portion of

³ See reference (a) ‘Tallawarra Stage B –Open Cycle Gas Turbine Power Station Project. Preliminary Environmental Assessment Final 29 March 2007 p.1.

⁴See Reference (b) Environment and Planning Committee 2nd April 2007 Item 6 p.98

the Tallawarra site, and would be accepting of residential development if it is kept at lower densities and the prominent ridgelines are maintained.”

The residents of East Dapto and of course this includes the residents of Koonawarra, are adamantly opposed to ANY housing on the northern part of the Lands, i.e. the land known previously as Elliot’s Riding School. We know this because we regularly doorknock our area, we have had 150 local people to our meetings, and we have already collected 900 signatures (at 3/9/07) which demonstrates mounting resident opposition.

We are not opposing the other developments, nor development in general, but reserve our right to question negative environmental influences from them which may negatively affect the Illawarra, and the quality of life for all residents who have a stake in the economic, social and environmental well being of this area.

ACCESS AND TRANSPORT

The Tallawarra Point area does not have any direct access to the F6 Freeway. The trucks going in and out of the power station site have to go south to the roundabout at Albion Park Rail in order to turn north. How will the trucks enter and leave the site carrying distillate/diesel and other supplies to the power stations and to the Industrial Areas plus the proposed customers, residents of 600 houses and their visitors’ vehicles?

The increased population from Tullimbah, the huge proposed Illawarra Industrial Park, proposed Illawarra hospital and Albion Park dormitory suburbs will impact on the Princes Highway. Also the increased population from the West Dapto area will be using these roads. Albion Park Rail is already facing the problem of gridlock traffic. We believe that there has been a traffic study in Albion Park Rail which says that the Illawarra Business Park will cause 60 trucks per hour and numerous cars adding to the roundabout at the Illawarra Highway and the Princes Highway. The infrastructure is just not there for the increase in road usage.

Currently freeway travel north between Dapto and Berkeley can slow from 100 kilometres per hour to 30 kilometres per hour and below that, caused by the density of morning peak period traffic. The future population of West Dapto and other housing infill in East Dapto will seriously increase this usage. Northern access from the Lands will have to be via Gilba Road, Wyndarra Way, Lakelands Drive, and other back streets in Lakelands. This is not feasible. Kanahooka Road is designated for light traffic only.

The residents living along those roads find the current increased and increasing traffic loads and their speeds stressful and frightening. These roads were never designed for this kind of traffic. Residents are concerned that the increased traffic will affect children's safety, their amenity and lifestyle. It appears from anecdotal evidence that a higher proportion of 6 to 16 year olds spent time on the streets together on bicycles in Koonawarra than in most other suburbs. This density of children on bicycles is not as evident in other parts of East Dapto. We consider that an increased number of children playing on the roads is due to the internal design of Housing Department homes. It is pleasingly more "old fashioned" and healthy for children to be out doors playing together and on their bikes in a way which is less commonly seen in the Australia of today (with the larger houses) than of the past. These children have a right to play outside their homes, and should not be negatively affected by future traffic pressures from more development than Koonawarra infrastructure can cope with without serious deleterious effects on the present residents.

There is no access ramp onto the Freeway going south from this area. The Yallah Bay Road comes out at a narrow exit onto a side road of the Highway going both north and south. This would need serious updating to accommodate the traffic. Will this be at public expense or will the developer pay for these major alterations to a major artery road? Any permitted development on the lands will have to consider master plan design outcomes that reduce traffic circulation both within the site and particularly entering and leaving the Lands. We submit that there is no suitable road access and egress for the population of the 500 houses in the north that TRU wish to have built. There is nothing in the plans which indicates the provision of childcare, education, library, community hall, youth centre etc on the site therefore the residents and workers there will have to drive out to obtain all services other than what one might get at a corner shop or an industrial area.

The trucks carrying distillate, and other supply requirements for the power stations, the employees' cars, plus the heavy and light duty traffic, both supply and customers, using the large industrial lands should have detailed estimates done on projected traffic volumes, with an analysis of whether the roads which now service and will service the site, could ever cope with the volume and weight of the traffic. Koonawarra and the rest of East Dapto surrounding road network will already be further stressed by the traffic volume from 100 houses planned for Mt. Brown's slopes⁵ in addition to the TRU proposal. Also extensive extra housing is planned for along the eastern end of Kanahooka Road.

⁵ lot 2 Wyndarra Way and adjacent development

East Dapto is poorly served by public transport now. Many of those who wished to use the bus system have found themselves defeated by poor access to timetables, infrequent services, high cost and unreliable service. This has further pushed the service into a residual service used mainly by school children and the poor. CRED had hoped that in order to service the West Dapto of the future, we might have had an increased service, beginning now, which might connect well with the trains and with fast buses to Wollongong. This would have had increased usage over time as it showed its merits and could have grown apace with the West Dapto population increase. It costs as much for a return taxi from Kanahooka to the Dapto Station as it does for the entire petrol to Sydney and back in a small car. This makes for more cars on the roads.

SKM state:

- *“Distillate Fuel will be transported to the site by road tankers on an as needed basis.”*⁶

What provisions have been made for this extra road usage? What routes will be used?

What provision for safety e.g. accident, spillage, and consequent risk to the Lake and surrounding wetlands etc.?

How many diesel trucks will be entering and leaving each day? Will Stage B be diesel fuelled with gas injection? How could such an expensive piece of infrastructure be kept idle except for peak load usage, especially considering the massive developments proposed on this site, in the west of Shellharbour City, and later in West Dapto.

In the latter possibility, that is, full time diesel gas injected operation, how many trucks would carry diesel onto the power station site each day? What measures will be in place for vapour control? The figures should be produced now for the range of possible scenarios that could occur in the future. Otherwise how can the Government and Council provide proper infrastructure provision?

HERITAGE

We want it noted that the documents submitted on this project by TRU and their consultants have not asked the local community about heritage and therefore present an unbalanced view.

There are 17 Aboriginal sites and these are of great importance to Aboriginal people's heritage and to all local people regardless of their ethnic descent.

⁶ op cit reference 1 page 7

This land has been cleared and been grazing land for horses since the earliest times of white settlement. This horse culture has been a strong part of the life of people who live and have lived in East Dapto. There are many people who no longer ride, but have deep happy memories of what riding horses meant to them as children and young people. Many young people are known to have turned their lives around through their character building experiences with horsemanship. Horses are still prominent in the local culture and this is the only place where they can be safely kept and ridden. There is a training ring /lunging circle there and we would like to see an equestrian track curling around Tallawarra Point i.e. the land we call the "Elliott's riding school" or the "horse farm". Currently many locals of all ages keep their horses on that land. Houses there will bring a loss of amenity to us and a sharp change in our way of life. These horses belong to local people who have been able to afford to agist them there. They are not people who own horse floats nor cars suitable to pull them. The Pony Club has its grounds on Council Land there and is expanding its facilities including a clubhouse and a dressage arena. This will add to the facilities for horse riders. Horsemanship skills can bring employment for young people. The Dapto Show has international level horse jumping as a prominent feature every year. This and the presence of Kembla Grange is a tribute to the high standard of horsemanship in the district and the keen interest.

We have almost lost all the horse grazing lands along Kanahooka Rd. and there is no mention in any of the TRUenergy Consultants submissions and documents of the impact upon us of losing our horse grazing lands and with them a part of our way of life. There will be a corresponding loss of green space.

We submit that we have not had a chance to discuss this issue with TRU or any of their consultants.

CONSULTATION

The community of East Dapto feel that they have been excluded from the consultation process. We were notified of the two public consultations held at Ribbonwood. In fact by gathering together there and talking with each other, we realised how strongly our community felt about not wanting houses on Tallawarra Point. We regard housing as the least attractive, least intelligent, poorest planning, and least innovative outcome for that land. It will bring about the poorest outcomes for increased tourism, a poor use of a place of iconic natural beauty, and overcrowd our currently insufficient services and infrastructure.

With imagination there are so many possible alternatives:

- A caravan park with camping/eco tourism residential. (well screened)
- Equestrian track
- Horse grazing..
- restore the "Riding School" hire of horses as a tourism feature
- Regional Park
- Café/ restaurants in the style and class of "Diggies"/North Beach Cafe on Wollongong Beach
- A small out door amphitheatre for concerts, performance e.g. dancing, films and lectures. This would be vandal proof and have a small booth also vandal proof which contains electric points, a place to project a film or a PowerPoint display from, to sell tickets etc.⁷
- A promenade with cafes and outdoor music and Council provided BBQs.
- Public art
- Several playgrounds along the foreshores of similar standard to Kanahooka shops playground to take the pressure of over use away from the current facilities. Not like the one down at the power station which is much smaller and less interesting for the children than the one at Koonawarra Bay /Kanahooka shops. They need to be of equal standard to take the population and over use pressure off Koonawarra Bay playground.
- Sporting and recreational facilities.
- An annexe of the Botanic Gardens (c.f. Mt Annan Botanic gardens, an annexe of Sydney's Royal Botanic gardens.
- Allow the natural regeneration of the rainforest and the Illawarra Lowland Grassy Woodland to continue and the natural regrowth via the Acacia Scrub etc.

The TRUenergy Community Liaison Group (CLG) invited the local community representatives to join the CLG only on request from a Councillor and as late as June 2007. Therefore we have missed any early opportunity to comment.

Wollongong City Council Document⁸ describes the consultation process. Koonawarra Area Residents Association was never contacted and neither was the Dapto Neighbourhood Centre, not the Illawarra Community Services at Ribbonwood.⁹ Residents of East Dapto are noticeably absent from this list, despite the fact that TRU knew about us because we attended the Ribbonwood days. At Councillor Gigliotti's request CRED and

⁷ As in City of Yarra, Fairfield. Victoria

⁸ op cit Environment and Planning Committee P.97

⁹ Tallawarra lands LES Willan Associates P. 80

ICS have been included recently and they, like the community they represent, are adamantly against housing on the Tallawarra Point area. We have obtained the results of the consultation day Elton held with the CLG and we submit it as part of this submission. We would have said similar things and much more if we had the chance.¹⁰

We have had informal conversations with members of the CLG who were present at that consultation. They say to us that they no longer attend the Consultation Group as they weren't being listened to and it was a waste of their time.

At least 10 of us attended the Ribbonwood sessions independently of each other, as CRED was not formed then. One of us who expressed the strongest disapproval of the plans to put houses on Tallawarra Point had an unsolicited phone call to their home from a TRUenergy employee after the first Ribbonwood consultation and a few days before the second one, in which the TRU energy person named Nicola something, said that The Koonawarra Area Residents Association were planning to attend the second consultation with banners and protest outside it, and that she wanted to tell them that they were getting houses on the Northern part of the Lands whether the local residents liked it or not. KARA never had any such intention. The idea was ridiculous and offensive. The ethics of an international company telephoning in such a manner an individual resident who was only known to them because she attended the public consultation at Ribbonwood are questionable. The call makes a mockery of any pretence that we the local community have been treated with respect, consulted or heard. When the resident complained to the company, the answer was "I don't think that Nicola would have done that". No investigation or apology. This is another example of why the residents of East Dapto have been given the impression that they and their views do not matter.

The Ribbonwood consultations were constructed so that the local residents could only say whether they wanted houses, industry or neither on the northern part of the Lands. No genuine opportunity was allowed for us to have our Heritage concerns noted. This is borne out by the complete lack of reference to the important European heritage issues in any of the submissions or documents presented by TRUenergy and its consultants. At every opportunity, limited as they have been, the local residents have put their very strongly held opinions about the use of the land not needed for the power stations. On every occasion they have expressed clear disapproval of any housing on the northern part of the site. In fact the most of the area where we believe those houses should NOT be allowed, is the area marked for low density residential housing by

¹⁰ Map 1. and Map 2. From the Community Liaison Group Planning Day

TRUenergy. The area north of the Infrastructure Zone (SP2) is where we have always said should be left as green space and not rezoned.¹¹ The reference to the ridgelines is surprising as we don't want houses anywhere there, not on the ridgelines and not anywhere else north of the power stations. According to our calculations, if houses were built in the northern R2 areas, the ridgeline would be obscured to all observers on Tallawarra Point from below a height of approximately 100m. References to preserving the ridgeline are an example of "doublespeak" implying the preservation of something important while simultaneously destroying all that is important. The ridgeline is worth little without the preservation of the green scenery which underlies it.

Local residents considered that that consultation was poorly done by current standards of professional consultation and our views have been either glossed over or misrepresented in the documentation put forward to Council and the Department of Planning.

It is difficult for the public to feel informed and consulted when they hear and read conflicting and ambiguous statements from TRUenergy. The description of Stage B specifies that it is a peak load power station consisting of 2 to 3 gas turbines.¹² It seems strange that a multinational company like China Light and Power doesn't have the forward financial and project planning to know how many gas turbines they are planning to build here. They state that natural gas will be the primary fuel with distillate as back up during any lack of gas supply. TRUenergy have told the CLG that there is to be an emergency diesel generator. SKM state that this will only be "to provide emergency power during a station trip or a complete system shutdown."¹³ but TRUenergy have told CLG members that diesel will be used in summer and winter when extra supply of energy is needed to meet extra demand in very cold or very hot weather. This is vague and not specific in relation to just how much air pollution we are all facing.

Actually, it would be ridiculously uneconomic to not run power station Stage B all the time. Diesel is a more expensive fuel than gas but when mixed with gas it is much more economic than either on their own. The operation of Tallawarra Stage B Power Station would result in the emission of combustion products through exhaust stacks. "The emissions would largely comprise carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides (NOx)".¹⁴ The word "largely" implies more. The community

¹¹ Draft structure plan Wollongong City Council p.105

¹² Preliminary Environmental Assessment P.6.

¹³ *ibid* p. 8

¹⁴ *ibid* p.16

is entitled to very detailed analysis of the air pollution coming out of the power stations at all times of the year. TRUenergy said to CRED that the assurance the community has that they won't use the diesel backup constantly, is that it is more expensive to buy diesel than natural gas. The advantage of diesel is that it can be started up very quickly and requires very few employees and when mixed with gas is more efficient and economic.

It is reasonable to ask TRU for a detailed analysis of emissions from all three stacks in any of a number of possible scenarios. E.g.

1. Stage A and B both running on gas all the time
2. Stage A running on gas all the time and Stage B running at projected high demand times on gas? Gas and diesel mixed/ or just diesel?
3. Stage A running all the time on gas and Stage B running all the time on gas only (is this part of any proposal?) or all the time on gas and diesel or on only diesel?

Wollongong is already suffering from high air pollution and the people deserve a careful publicly available analysis of the air pollution to be expected from Tallawarra Power stations.

Has a hazard assessment been done as part of the environmental assessment for the project in order to determine if the project is categorised as a potentially hazardous or potentially offensive industry?

The Preliminary Environmental Assessment does not even bother to specify just what type of diesel/distillate will be used. There are different types with differing chemical makeup and it would seem that this would be a very important matter to mention and then address in a Preliminary Environmental Assessment document.

WATER

If using diesel/distillate fuel, then demineralised water is required in the generator to cool it. This will be demineralised on site but the original source of the water is unspecified. What would the amounts of water required be? It is specified that drinking water will come from Sydney mains. After the water is demineralised, the mineral waste will be discharged through the wetlands. Which wetlands exactly and how will the lake be safeguarded? Will the wetlands be poisoned or what other environmental effects might there be e.g. on birds and other wildlife and vegetation? With such dense housing and other developments very close to the wetlands proposed for the Tallawarra lands, how will the waste discharge be safely stored without children, adolescents and others getting into it? Will it be close to the shared pathway, playgrounds, housing the foreshores etc.?

Can current sewerage services cope with an extra 600 houses on the northern part of the lands plus another 400 or so on Mt Brown and along Kanahooka Road?

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATHS

The northern lands are very steep and use of bicycles is unlikely away from the foreshores. They are more suited to horseriding. The initial plans for the whole site do not highlight cycle paths which could be a feature of the flatter areas in the southern section of The Tallawarra Lands. We have been assured that it is Council's plan to see that a shared pathway is built right around the Tallawarra Lands. We are delighted with this plan.

SOILS

Acid sulphate soils¹⁵ Low lying areas adjacent to Lake Illawarra are likely to be affected by acid sulphate soils.

There is as yet no study of the extent to which areas of the site are affected by acid sulphate soils. Considering the soil disturbance that would be required for building roads and housing, how can rezoning for development be considered without this information?

Much of the land to be developed is very steep. How will erosion and run off into the Lake be prevented? How will the run off be cleaned before entering the Lake?

The plans (see map 4) do not seem to leave enough undeveloped space for polishing ponds.

Has there been a soil analysis to show whether any of the soils found on the lands present a constraint to urban and industrial development because of significant swell shrink potential, salinity, high erodibility potential and heavy spills of previous chemicals e.g. diesel, soda ash etc.

NOISE

The area will be impacted by noise from the approved CCGT Power station currently under development.¹⁶ And presumably also by noise

¹⁵ Kanahooka LEP p.24,26,28.

from the OCGT's. Willana Associates states "*Noise buffers will be required to protect the amenity of future occupants of residential development*".¹⁷

This seems to us to be a very strong argument for not putting houses on land which has such high visual and tourism value. Even TRU energy's own consultants are saying that noise pollution will be a problem.

Aircraft passing overhead and industrial noise will lower values of the houses built on such iconic visually prominent land. Koonawarra is now suffering from aircraft noise. If the Tallawarra point area is kept free of suburban housing, there will be a flight path above there for the inevitable future increase in flights to Albion Park Airport.

FLORA AND FAUNA¹⁸

CRED would like to see all areas of Illawarra Subtropical Rainforest, Illawarra Lowlands Grassy Woodland, Coastal Floodplain Swamp Sclerophyll Forest and of course SEPP wetlands preserved. Ash Dam 3 may also be important for bird life. We see no reason for bulldozing the acacia scrub high on Tallawarra Point to allow for housing. This scrub has value in itself. The maps available are old and out of date. There is more high quality vegetation than these old maps show.

The vegetation described above on Mt Brown is particularly important. Mt Brown native vegetation is threatened on all sides by private ownership, rezoning and development. CRED considers that the bushland of Mt Brown is to Dapto as Blackbutt Forest is to the Shellharbour LGA. Once it is lost to development it can never be regained for the future. The pressures of increasing population on Dapto demand that Mt Brown vegetation and therefore fauna be protected for future generations. JBA Urban Planning Consultants point out "*developing the Tallawarra lands will bring significant community benefits through additional environmental, conservation and recreation land*".¹⁹ Actually, at present before development of the site, we have a huge area of open green space (The Riding School/horse farm) which is used on a daily basis. Also many people walk and ride horses and bicycles around the Lakeshore which is currently wild and unmanicured. This provides habitat for many creatures including snakes, frogs and quail. We know that the entire area is currently used and enjoyed by the public except for the land that

¹⁶ Reference a) P.16

¹⁷ Reference c) p.83

¹⁸ See Appendices map 5 vegetation communities

¹⁹ See reference (e)

TRUenergy has fenced off. Tallawarra Point is open space used by raptors coming down from the escarpment for feeding.

The local residents have less land now than we had, and after the proposed developments we will have a great deal less than we have now. The only improvement in our access will be if the LIA is given at least 100 metres setback from the Lake Shores right around the entire site and also enough land in addition to that, to enable a cycleway/shared pathway in a place where it is economic to cross Duck creek and around the wetlands. It is to be hoped that the LIA will receive extra land to allow for the expected rising of sea levels. CRED feels that the LIA is the best landholder to safeguard the interests of the lake and therefore the public's interests. Private ownership has all the consequent pressures to make the most money out of it in the short term. The community consultation brought forward suggestions for a Nature Interpretation Centre/Local Aboriginal History/ Wetlands Education Centre. How will this be brought about? Will the developer be asked to pay for it? The Tallawarra lands were sold for so little money that it is reasonable to expect TRU to make substantial contributions. Alstom is building the Power stations and before long, TRU will have partner companies which are land developers and the designers of the Industrial areas. By then the profits will be enormous but it will be harder to trace who should pay for infrastructure as the initial peppercorn sale price will have 'disappeared' into complex financial transactions and multiple ownerships.

Although TRU repeatedly have stated how difficult it is to make money generating power, their recent submission to the government indicates that gas generation is becoming economically viable. In their own words, they do not need to build houses on Tallawarra Point to make this project possible.²⁰

The Illawarra Lake Authority has expressed concern about the impact of more houses on the quality of the water in Lake Illawarra. CRED is asking for requests for rezoning to be accompanied by a detailed study of the environmental impact on Lake Illawarra of the various proposed developments.

The developments which could increase our amenity, rather than just add extra people to the overuse of what limited services we have now, would be a shared pathway, increased tourism, several playgrounds around the Lake shores of similar quality to the one at Koonawarra Bay/Kanahooka shops, café/restaurants on the northern lands providing superior quality food and coffee. We know that the local population would be heavy users of such a facility. We would need some kind of residential accommodation for tourists, possibly a Caravan park run by someone like the NRMA with an Eco tourism slant e.g enjoying bushwalking in Mt Brown and cycling

²⁰<http://abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/08//31/2020587.htm?section=business>

and walking along the lake shores, sailing and boating, fishing horse riding etc. There could be an Aboriginal Cultural Tours Company. This latter service would be a very positive thing for Dapto which has a particularly high Aboriginal population.

A vital environmental issue is that Tallawarra is a key site in the Yallah-Calderwood Corridor. The principles of the Corridor seek to protect and if possible reinstate the natural vegetation along the corridor. The massive overdevelopment of this site which is being proposed makes a mockery of any pretence at preserving Tallawarra's natural environment from encroachment and overuse of what little may be preserved.

ILLAWARRA REGIONAL STRATEGY 2006-31

States that the following principles should apply to development.

*"Ensure quality urban design and amenity, which recognises local character and supports transport choice and economic growth."*²¹

While Wollongong and NSW are currently under housing stress, the immediate planning to ameliorate that, in this area, is for West Dapto, Calderwood and infill particularly around Kanahooka Road. TRUenergy have suggested that there could be provision for housing for the aged on Tallawarra Point. The land is too steep to be suitable for aged housing. Older and elderly people need flat spaces to walk as for example they can often be seen on walking frames along Kanahooka Road from the IRT complex. They need houses without steps, not houses on a hillside.

500-600 houses on Tallawarra Point would be a complete failure to recognise and fit in with local character. The locality does not have the social services it needs now, and has to contend with the arrival of the population from around three hundred planned new dwellings due to infill on Mt. Brown and along Kanahooka Road and elsewhere. This is too much change and pressure for a lower socio-economic area without an upgrade of services to match e.g. public transport, health, community health personnel, youth services, other public facilities. This community does not have a Community Social Worker/Community Development Worker. They are asking for large areas of medium density housing in the southern portion of the lands. We suggest that housing for the aged and public housing in various forms would be a very good idea there.

The railway station is a long way from these proposed houses and the rail system is notorious for its inadequacies.

²¹ Page 7

The local bus system is not an example of successful public transport. East Dapto is poorly served by cycle paths. There is no system of cycle paths going to and from any shopping areas, large or small.

The proposed industrial areas will create some jobs. There will be few workers required by the power stations (less than forty). CRED has lots of ideas about how the Tallawarra Point /northern area of the Lands could be used to innovatively enhance the life style of present residents and create jobs through tourism.

“Support affordable housing strategies, as appropriate, for specific areas and developments”

The Tallawarra Point area is an outstanding headland, of visual prominence from around Lake Illawarra in particular from Berkeley, Lake Heights, Warrawong, Primbee, Windang, Lake South, Warilla, Mt Warrigal, Blackbutt and Oak Flats and also for the residents of Kanahooka and Koonawarra. The green space is prominent from viewpoints all around and Illawarra people have a strong emotional attachment to that iconic visual beauty. Its value for tourism and for the mental health of residents cannot be estimated. The planned houses will occupy this headland forever and its current amazing visual quality will be lost. Modern building designs do not leave room for trees and bushes as in older areas. The houses built there will want to maximise their views so will be unable to be screened. The larger number who look at the land from elsewhere around the Lake will lose a very precious resource. Wollongong and Shellharbour will have lost an irreplaceable part of the natural beauty of the Lake and the place will look more “just like everywhere else”.

Because of the views from each block of land, the prices will be higher. Therefore this release will not reduce housing stress on a cost basis. Having bought the expensive blocks because of the view, the proposed new residents will be faced with noise for the power station, and fumes from both gas turbines and the diesel. The medium density housing proposed for the area adjacent to Haywards Bay could be specially designed as low cost housing, provided suitable protection from run off into the Lake can be instituted.

We CRED would like to see an analysis of the fumes (from both gas stage A and gas/diesel stage B) which shows whether the stacks are actually high enough for maximum carry away of pollution and minimum impact on resident health and amenity.

How much of this land has been allocated to the Department of Housing for truly low cost housing?

“The environment of the Lake is delicately balanced and requires urban and industrial runoff to be well managed to prevent a permanent decline in water quality. Similarly the coastal values of the region need to be protected from poor quality development”

“Planning for new development and intensification of land uses also needs to incorporate an understanding and protection of cultural assets”

As expressed elsewhere in this submission, we do not believe that either European or Aboriginal cultural and heritage values are getting due consideration in these proposals. We seem to be expected to give up our heritage values in this site without compensation or consideration. We add that we do not want compensation. We want our Aboriginal sites and horseriding and grazing heritages preserved and respected.

*“The environmental challenges are to:
improve protection and enhancement of natural environments, including significant biodiversity corridors, coastal lakes and estuaries, and landscape values.”*

We submit that rezoning the land from Environmental Protection-Conservation to allow housing on the Tallawarra point area is entirely contrary to the above statement.

“Appropriately conserve and protect heritage items and values (European, cultural and Aboriginal) and incorporate these values within land use planning and natural resource management processes”

We submit that this policy is being disregarded by the TRU plans for the site. The most important Aboriginal site is right beside the power station and we have been told that a sewerage works has been upgraded there. To our knowledge the Local Land Council did not oversight the work. On another site we were told that a restaurant would be built. We submit that European heritage which is very important to local people has not been listened to or acknowledged in any way. We ask you to give this heritage due consideration before allowing this land to be rezoned.

“Limit development in places constrained by coastal processes..or which are significant scenic cultural landscapes”²²

How could this area of outstanding and iconic visual beauty be considered for housing? We the local residents have many ideas about how it could be used in keeping with our heritage values and to bring social capital and jobs to our community.

²² P.9 Illawarra Regional Strategy

We are residents and therefore volunteers trying to represent ourselves and our community's needs while the dominant voice is coming from a multi national company with huge resources at its disposal and teams of professional consultants to present its economic interests. It is clearly expressed policy that we should be consulted and our views taken into account on heritage matters and the local character of an area should be preserved²³

THE ILLAWARRA REGIONAL PLAN

This proposed development²⁴ does not meet any of the criteria set down under Item 2. ACCESS for sustainable new developments. Nor does it meet criteria under item 7. Environmental Protection, nor under item 8. Quality and Equity in Services.

It places many fragile social and natural environments surrounding it at risk.

The Illawarra Regional Plan also states the following:

*"Where development or rezoning increases the need for State infrastructure, the Minister for Planning may require a contribution to the provision of such infrastructure having regard to the State Infrastructure Strategy and equity considerations."*²⁵

This rezoning, which is against our wishes and contrary to good planning, would require contributions to all levels of state infrastructure and local government as well. This includes roads, public transport, and staff and beds in health and hospital services, police, teachers, community health nurses and social workers, mental health workers, a youth centre and worker, and a library levy, Ambulance, playgrounds and community buildings and facilities for the residents who are already here etc.

We suggest that this land could be considered as a major tourism facility. It could have residential accommodation, (well screened), a riding school where people could hire horses and ride them, have riding lessons. Focussing on nature based tourism, sailing, canoeing, birdwatching, night trips to observe and learn about the bat species on Mt Brown, Aboriginal

²³ Section 11 p.39 ibid

²⁴ p.42 Threshold Sustainability Criteria. Illawarra Regional Plan

²⁵ ibid p.9

cultural tours, Rainforest and Illawarra Lowland Grassy Woodland appreciation tours, cycling, walking, leisure, recreation and culture based tourism. At present there is insufficient emphasis on clever ways of attracting the tourist dollar to the Illawarra. We would like to see that changed for the better and more jobs for our young people.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The site plays an important role in helping to provide an ecological link between the escarpment and the coast. The plans submitted by TRUenergy are a gross overdevelopment of this site.²⁶ Appendix map 3. illustrates how big an impact this entire development intends to have on the suburbs surrounding the Lake. While the NSW Government needs to have the power stations to secure power supplies for the state, the rest of the developments are too much too quickly and could be slowed down until there has been sufficient time for the planners and the population to evaluate the overall impact on the Illawarra.

Recent Tasmanian studies²⁷ describe a long term study in Tasmania by Professor Ray Lowenthal showing that children who lived within 300 metres of high voltage power lines were 5 times more likely to develop leukaemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma than the rest of the population. High voltage power lines run right across the Tallawarra point area. There is no allowance for 300 metre set backs (or any set backs at all) on the TRU plans.

In these times of climate change and warming of the planet with its consequent problems, carbon credits are a reasonable expectation of power companies and other polluters who contribute to global warming. It is not unreasonable to ask TRUenergy, (whose senior staff do not even live in NSW and will never be affected by the over development of the site as the local residents and tourists will be) to allow the northern part of the lands to remain as green space as a carbon credit contribution to the overall well being of all of us. Tallawarra Point lands could be a carbon credit handed over to either Wollongong Council, the LIA or National Parks to manage for eco tourism and community social benefit.

Department of Planning's Policy is to have an overall strategic and state wide approach to rezoning of land which is currently zoned Environmental Protection – Conservation, rather than spot rezonings here, there and anywhere. Mt Brown is suffering from the spot rezoning effect which will be deeply regretted by later generations. Mt Brown has heritage status in the current LEP.

²⁶ Appendices map 3

²⁷ Sydney Morning Herald 22/8/07 from the Internal Medicine Journal

In summary, we submit that there are no sensible arguments in favour of putting houses on the northern part of the Tallawarra Lands and numerous reasons why it would be a terrible mistake for the future of the Illawarra.

APPENDICES

Map 1. and Map 2. TRUenergy CLG consultation day: ideas (from those chosen by TXU to represent the community), on how they would like to see the lands used which are extra to the power stations' needs

Map 3. Tallawarra Point and showing how huge the site is, particularly in the context of the Lake and measured against the size of any other suburbs surrounding the Lake.

Map 4. TRUenergy's proposals for the site. Wollongong Draft LEP

Map 5. Vegetation Communities

REFERENCES

1. Tallawarra Stage B-Open Cycle Gas Turbine Power Station Project Preliminary Environmental Assessment. Sinclair, Knight & Merz Final 29 March 2007

2. Tallawarra Lands Local Environmental Study Report of Acting Manager City Strategy (JB) 15/03/07 (Environment and Planning Committee 2 April 2007)

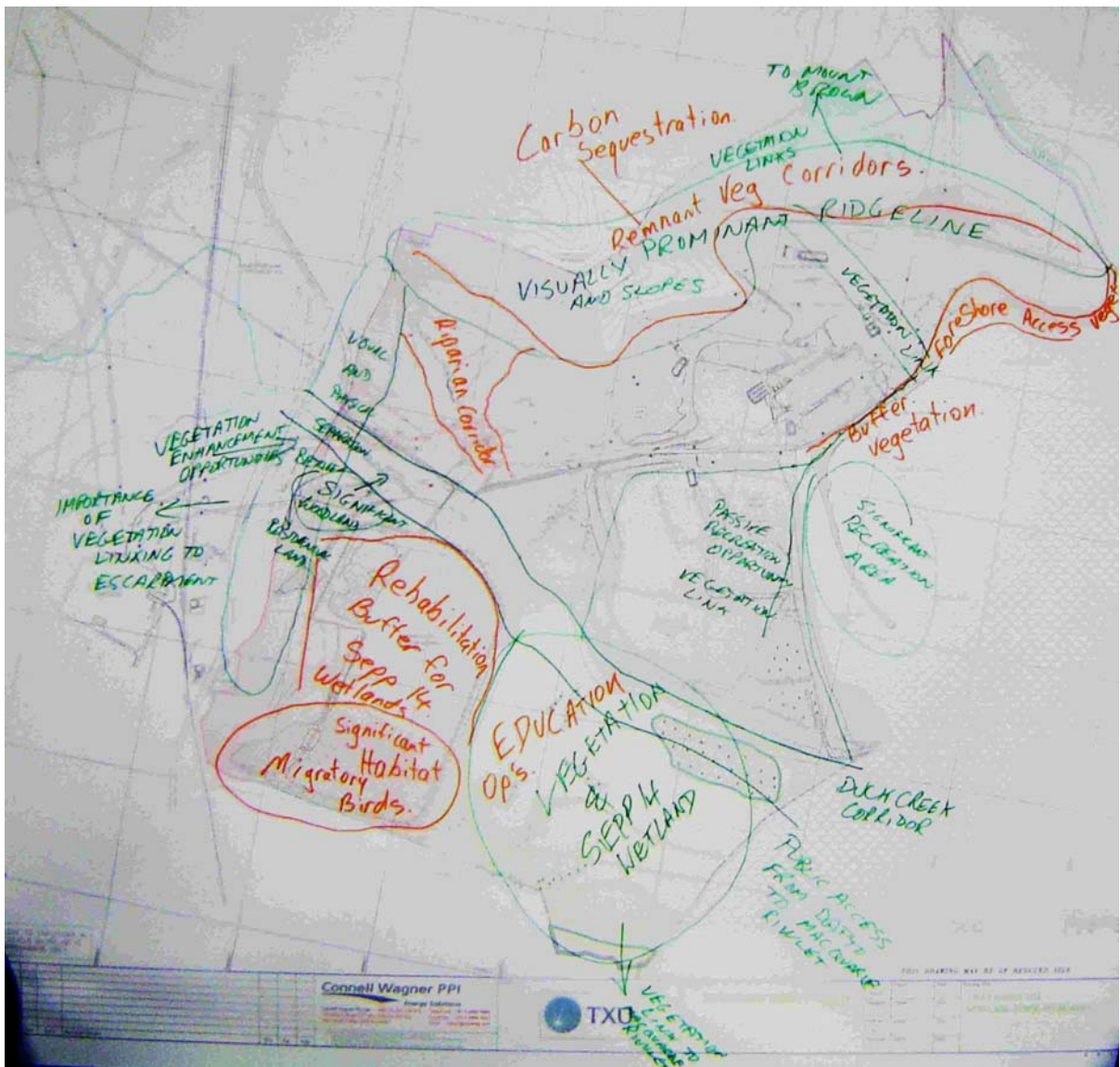
3. Willana Associates Tallawarra Lands Local Environment Study 2006

4. Illawarra Regional Strategy 2006-31

5. JBA Urban Planning Consultants Pre rezoning submission July 2005 04380



Map1.



Map 2

2.0 Overview of Site Characteristics

The following section provides preliminary information regarding the site's characteristics and attributes. More detailed investigations will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the formal reasoning report.

2.1 Location and context

The site is located on the Princes Highway east of Dapto on the western foreshore of Lake Illawarra. The location of the site and its surrounds are shown at Figure 1.

The site is significant from both a local and regional perspective due to its location and considerable land holding in single ownership close to infrastructure facilities on the foreshores of Lake Illawarra.



Figure 1 – Site context

Map 4

