



Bonny Hills Progress Association INC.

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The General Manager

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

PO Box 84

Port Macquarie NSW 2444

CC Rebecca Montague-Drake

Re: PMHC Draft Biodiversity Strategy 2017-2030

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Council's Draft Biodiversity Strategy 2017-2030.

BHPA is strongly supportive of Council's Biodiversity Strategy.

As you are aware Bonny Hills Progress Association (BHPA) has long been strongly supportive of initiatives to maintain and enhance our environmental assets and their integrity and has supported to the hilt the development of this Strategy, including the underpinning mapping project behind it. Our representation on the Community Panel for the project (via President, Roger Barlow), is indicative of our commitment.

It is clear from any consultative meeting that Council has held with communities in our LGA, (the recent ECWOC meetings at Bonny Hills provide fine examples), that one of the overriding reasons people want to live here is because of the amazing environmental attributes of the region.

And yet we see continual environmental degradation associated with development as the norm – generally wholesale but also by gradual attrition – so undermining the very essence of the community's expressed value proposition. Photographic examples of this are attached as clear evidence of this contention.

As part of a strategic approach to planning further development, lack of a Biodiversity Strategy and the associated data required via verified mapping, has been a serious deficiency – both for planners and developers. The value of its

presence, even in draft form, was obvious in the construct of Council's Draft Urban Growth Management Strategy 2017-2036.

Overall this is an impressive and thoughtfully constructed document, well backed up by mapping data, expert advice, analyses and broad community consultation. The stated aims are clearly set out and laudable, as are the actions required to deliver the desired outcomes, as set out on the website, viz:

"This Biodiversity Strategy aims to guide and enable strategic growth and development while conserving biodiversity values by:

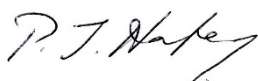
- *Identifying biological priority areas in LGA.*
- *Identifying islands/patches of contiguous vegetation and where the key habitat linkages and connections are between this vegetation.*
- *Identifying threats to biodiversity.*
- *Defining Actions to protect priority areas and reduce threats.*
- *Providing strategic direction and information to guide investment on private and public lands in a voluntary manner."*

Our main qualms are that the desired outcomes via the action plan may not be met because:

- The actions may not be sufficiently bold, and
- Funding and resource requirements have been seriously underestimated, the clearest example being that a staff of two professionals cannot hope to deliver the required outputs and outcomes
- Funding will not be provided by Council because of competing demands and/or lack of will.
- Key performance indicators and measurable outputs/outcomes and timelines are not clearly specified in the document (though we understand they have been described elsewhere).
- Some strategies like offsets, and long term voluntary involvement on private land provide risks that the desired outcomes will not be met.

But overall, even without 'legislative teeth' this initiative provides the basis and opportunity for a giant leap forward on past performance. If you would like to discuss any of these points further, we will be only too happy to oblige.

Yours sincerely,



Phil Hafey

BHPA Secretary

26 February 2018

What we don't want to see:



Wholesale large scale tree felling in new developments



Wholesale clearing of an area like this, west of Lake Cathie - marked for investigation as residential in Council's Draft UGMS



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Wholesale tree felling in developments infilling existing residential areas





Old growth logging of wildlife habitat to support an unviable goat farm in Bonny Hills

What we do want to see:



Sensitive residential development with interspersed existing native trees and shrubs and tree-lined pathways