

IPART Review - Shoalhaven City Council Special Variation Application

I can appreciate the costs associated with maintaining roads, buildings and other infrastructure across the very large area of the Shoalhaven LGA are going to be much higher than a more centralised urban LGA, however, I am concerned about waste of ratepayers money associated with community engagement activities and consultants' reports which are ignored by Councilors.

The Our Coast, Our Lifestyle survey, Sea level rise (SLR) projections and Revised Coastal Hazard Review are recent (and not isolated) examples:

In the Shoalhaven, Sea level rise projections are:

- 100 mm for 2030
- 230 mm for 2050
- 350 mm for 2100

The 350 mm projected rise for 2100 is one third that anticipated in all other NSW south coast Council areas. Eurobodalla council is planning for a 980 mm SLR; while Wollongong City, Shellharbour and Kiama councils are preparing for a 900 mm rise.

Shoalhaven Councilors acknowledge the projected 2100 level has an 85% chance of being exceeded.

Councilors reached this decision by rejecting recommendations from staff, their environmental advisory committee, consultants (Whitehead & Associates) and the Our Coast Our Lifestyle survey which showed an overwhelming majority of respondents did not support Council approving developments in areas at risk because of concerns about the long term financial risk.

It gets worse. Consultants have now been paid to revise Shoalhaven City Council's Coastal Hazard Mapping [REDACTED]. These [REDACTED] coastal hazard maps will be used to define the "Coastal Vulnerability Area" under the *Coastal Management Act 2016* as well as the State Environmental Planning Policy (Coastal Management) 2016, once they come into force.

This means that SCC will [REDACTED] allow inappropriate developments in coastal hazard zones that will put at risk public safety from coastal hazards and encourage land use that will increase exposure to risks from coastal hazards.

SCC has rejected the independent advice from Whitehead & Associates [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which is the generally accepted condition for indemnity (from liability) with respect to s733 and the 'good faith' provisions of the Local Government Act.

I cannot see how on one hand, Shoalhaven City Council can seek significant rate increases, and on the other expose ratepayers to unacceptable levels of legal and financial liability. I recommend that before this variation is approved, IPART examines the record of Shoalhaven City Council in this regard.

Annie Boutland

[REDACTED]

9 March 2017