

The Minister for Education and Community Services
The Hon Adrian Piccoli MP
P.O. Box 5341
Sydney, NSW 2000

Re the Sale of 182 and 246-248 Port Stephens Drive and
10-14 Short Rd Salamander Bay

Dear Sir,

The purpose of this letter is to request that you withdraw the above mentioned sites from sale and instead negotiate with the local community and Port Stephens Council to include these lots in the Mambo Wetlands Reserve environmental protection area.

The blocks in question are heavily vegetated swamp sclerophyll forest which are registered as 'Endangered Ecological Communities'. They abut the Mambo Wetlands Reserve which covers 175 hectares of saltwater and freshwater wetland which is part of Port Stephens Estuary listed under the National Estate, having gained this listing as a result of its ecological significance. The coastal margin in this area which includes listed lots for sale on the water's edge contains mangroves and an extensive area of seagrasses. Further urban development of Wanda and Mambo Wetlands Reserves was discontinued in the early 1990 as a result of enormous community pressure.

All this land is zoned E2 Environmental Protection and the constraints of the site include high bush fire risk, acid sulphate soils, Koala habitat. The site is also subject to SEPP 71 Coastal Protection. Under the current environmental zoning any future development is limited and must be in accordance with the Local environmental Plan of Port Stephens Council.

The area forms part of an important wildlife corridor and habitat, stretching south of Salamander Way, west towards Soldiers Point and also linking up with Tomaree National Park and Taylors Beach Nature Reserve. The habitat includes native fauna, many of which are endangered and threatened species including, but not limited to, koalas, bats, squirrel gliders, powerful owls, Wallum froglets, green bell frog and various migratory birds which exist in the area and contribute substantially to the aquatic processes of the estuary. Local environmental groups have been committed to land regeneration and have done considerable work in maintaining, protecting and restoring the local flora and fauna in the area.

The notice of the proposed sale was greeted by the community with great alarm. Our committee would like to protest the sale of the land and call for an immediate process of community consultation to commence. We request that minister agree to meet local community groups to discuss options for the future disposal of this land.

Thank you for your consideration

Catherine Norman
Secretary of the
Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association