



6<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Ms J George, MP  
Member for Throsby  
PO Box 864  
DAPTO 2530

**RE: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT**

Healthy Cities Illawarra wishes to express our strong opposition to the new *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Infrastructure and Other Planning Reform) Bill 2005*. We urge you to oppose this bill.

The bill removes many long-standing checks and balances (accountability, transparency, technical oversight and community input) for the most important, and potentially environmentally sensitive proposals, such as tourist resorts, mines and marinas, as well as developments in National Parks and fragile coastal zones currently protected under SEPP71.

The Bill fails the public interest and the environment in a number of ways.

**1. The Bill reduces the opportunity and effectiveness of community consultation.**

Community consultation has for years been an invaluable part of the planning process. The Bill not only reduces the opportunities and time-frames for public comment on developments deemed 'critical' or 'major', but also does not require that any public comment received by the minister actually be taken into consideration in planning decisions.

**2. The Bill makes no guarantee that an adequate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken for a development.**

The EIA has been an essential part of the planning process for many years. The Bill proposes the removal of the current EIA process for developments assessed under Part 3A, leaving the process entirely to the discretion of the Minister and the Director-General. Approval will be subject to a non-mandatory range of unspecified EIA requirements.

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***Better Health For All***

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### **3. The Bill reduces transparency in the entire assessment process for large-scale developments**

Accountability and transparency should be a key element in any planning process. The new Bill, Part 3A fails the NSW public by providing for an assessment process which is highly discretionary, opaque and largely free from accountability mechanisms. This is evidenced by the inclusion in the Bill of provisions which remove concurrences or approvals from other State agencies or departments, reduce public participation rights to an unacceptable level, and allow the Minister to approve development plans in principle before a detailed description of the proposal is submitted.

**In the interests of the environment and the community, we urge you to oppose this Bill in Parliament.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Wallner", with a horizontal flourish underneath.

Frank Wallner  
SECRETARY/MANAGER