



JERRINJA

Local Aboriginal Land Council

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MEDIA RELEASE – SEALARK CALLALA BAY DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Tuesday 13th June 2023

Jerrinja Local Aboriginal Land Council commends the recent decision by Shoalhaven City Council to withdraw its biodiversity certification application for Sealark's proposed Callala development.

We remain disgusted that the planning proposal for this development was ever allowed to proceed. Our objection, along with over 1000 others, was ignored, as was the cultural and ecological value of this land - which should be priceless.

We are not against appropriate development of appropriate sites. We are of course concerned about the housing crisis in the Shoalhaven, but utterly reject the premise this development will address it. We are a member driven, community controlled organisation and we know the wellbeing of our people is intrinsically embedded in the ecological health of Country.

Council's action may not be enough to stop what is occurring here, but we are heartened that our elected representatives have heard and are responding to community views. Forcing new environmental assessments at least means the ecological impact of the Black Summer bushfires will be taken into account. Even before the fires, we have witnessed the degeneration of our land and seascapes just in this current generation. A flawed offset scheme and farcical plans to relocate flora and fauna can not mitigate the planned losses.

We are sadly used to Aboriginal cultural heritage being viewed as movable - that inconveniently located artefacts can just be relocated as though this wouldn't destroy the cultural landscape. To hear the same logic being applied to hollow bearing trees and endangers gliders is also as offensive.

Ecological values are our cultural values, and we will never shy away from our cultural obligation and legislative mandate to protect Country. Whether it is this developer or any others, we urge land custodians to consider their moral obligations and the holistic and long term impact of their actions.

As in this case with this land, some land is so sensitive, so valuable, that it actually should be offered up as the offset for other development - not developed itself.