

From: [REDACTED]
To: [NSW Productivity Feedback](#)
Subject: IPC Review -
Date: Tuesday, 19 November 2019 4:54:28 PM

Following the extension of time given to Upper Hunter folk:

Dear Productivity Commissioner,

Thank you for the opportunity to table my perspective on the review of the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) .

Firstly, however, I need to create our context.

I ask for ‘productivity’ and activity in the present to be seen from the perspective of the health and well-being of future generations. Will our actions today be able to sustain life and all its complexities? The Treasury *Intergenerational Report – Future State 2056* is bereft of relevance. There is little interweaving of the limited components of society being considered, let alone considering the impact of our changing climate. The costs from the more commonly occurring more extreme weather events will be escalating regardless of when we get serious about acting in our state of climate emergency.

It is difficult to have any confidence in this Review of the Independent Planning Commission when there is grave dissonance and gross misunderstanding of what actually is in the public interest.

This is not a philosophical or political or ideological issue. The unequivocal fact is that human activity has dangerously changed the climate. The objectivity of science must be respected. It is absolutely NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST to continue with business as usual.

If State Significant Development (SSD) is seen in the context of an economy based on energy produced by burning fossil fuels its greatest significance must be considered to be its contribution to Global Heating. It is NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST to continue to fail to adequately account for the environmental and social costs of development.

It is apparent that the very old property law structure that retains the mineral resources for the Crown perversely drives the governance mind-set that exploiting these resources is in the public interest, that “we need them for the economy to run” whereas now the reverse is clearly true. The past 200 years of burning fossil fuels has produced our current situation of an increasingly dangerous climate. We cannot afford to do this any longer. Climate change denial is no longer at all tenable. The awareness is shifting.

I am perhaps being too generous, perhaps it is all as simple as greed and corruption and not a matter of consciousness and perspective and reluctance to embrace change.

In any case, the IPC plays a crucial role for any semblance of public confidence in governance. I maintain that it is imperative that the IPC is not only retained but enhanced. The independence of this body is vital and as recommended by ICAC, it needs to have a quasi-judicial status.

Changes to legislation and restructuring of bureaucracy has removed concurrence powers from SSD including from agencies responsible for biodiversity, pollution control, heritage protection, water use. The Department of Planning cannot be expected to be able to give

due consideration to these important matters. Clearly from BOTH a competence and potential corruption point of view, the IPC needs to be able to acquire the necessary expertise.

The IPC cannot rely purely on the assessment reports from the planning department. They have been created at the behest of government. They express the mind-set of business as usual that does not give equal consideration to the triple bottom line of economy, environment and community.

Land use conflict will be intensifying as our environment takes an even greater battering year after year from the impacts of climate change. Independent, objective, transparent and rigorous decision-making is the basis for maintaining order. The IPC provides for this.

I urge responsible government to consider the value of the IPC from multiple perspectives. It is not only in the public interest to have procedural checks and balances and independence, it is in the public interest to articulate the concerns of the general public. As each day passes it is clearer that planning decisions must take climate change impacts into account, now and in our uncertain future. The IPC has already stepped up to play their important role. It would be shooting ourselves in the foot to curtail their activity.

Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

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