

SHOALHAVEN LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

P/O Box 6100

Parliament House

Canberra A.C.T. 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to make a submission to the inquiry in relation to the impact on private property owners of the Federal Government's changes to pre-existing land use rights.

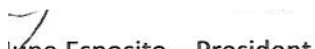
I represent the interests of 1.000 landowners and their families who purchased land in the Shoalhaven area in NSW during the period 1980 -1992. At the time of purchase our members were provided with documents that led them to believe that they would eventually be able to build houses on their individual properties. Investigations established that the Shoalhaven Council intended to zone the land for residential development in conjunction with a new shopping Centre to be located near Vincentia. The creation of this centre has already begun.

Last year Peter Garrett denied the Shoalhaven Council's request for approval of the residential zoning on the basis that the area was vital for the survival of endangered species of plants and animals. In so doing, he over-ruled previous agreements made between the owners, the Shoalhaven Council and the NSW State Government.

The owners disagree with this assessment and believe his decision has more to do with his personal political ambitions than it has to do with any reality but they also believe that if the government now considers the land to be of such vital environmental significance to the nation as a whole it should be prepared to purchase the land in the name of the public and pay the owners an acceptable amount of compensation under the Just Terms Compensation Act.

My understanding of the law in this country is that if someone manages to effectively steal the property of another person the thief can be brought before our law courts, charged and imprisoned and required to hand back the property or pay out the value of the property stolen. Why shouldn't the Government of Australia be required to do the same?

Yours sincerely


John Esposito – President

1/3/10