

**Submission
No 221**

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT CONSENTS IN NSW

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Given the ever-changing and evolving nature of environmental standards and global health recommendations, zombie DAs are an outdated and dangerous phenomenon. As a current university student studying both environmental science and law, this concept has become more and more familiar to me, as well as reflecting my own experiences in Manyana, NSW.

Having studied environmental planning law at university this semester, the importance of considering the precautionary principle for development and any environmental damage seems to be lost when developments continue to occur, or begin to occur, decades after they were originally approved. In most cases, these developments would likely not be approved nowadays if subject to current environmental understanding and analysis.

The Manyana Special Conservation Reserve arises as a prime example. After the 2019/20 bushfires, as I am sure you are aware, New South Wales lost 4.9 million hectares of bushland, with the most affected area being the NSW South Coast. These fires tore through the small suburb of Manyana, devastating thousands of flora and fauna species, destroying homes and taking lives. The small 20-hectare patch of land proposed for development was a place of refuge for the surviving native wildlife whose habitat was decimated by the roaring flames; kangaroos, bandicoots, wombats, wallabies and more. Most notably, endangered species such as the greater glider and swift parrot were confirmed by a number of independent local ecologists to reside in this area. The preservation of this land is essential for the recovery of the ecosystem to maintain a consistent strength in biodiversity, a sanctuary for these native species whilst the burnt landscape recovers and replenishes. As someone who has grown up spending a large portion of my life in Manyana, it was devastating to witness first-hand the impact of these fires.

No less than months after these fires, a historical DA was enforced, much to public outrage. The future of this development is subject to ministerial decision currently. The community would be undoubtedly and significantly placed at a detriment if this development was to occur, with a range of native plant species killed and native animal species displaced from the area. Furthermore, Manyana prides itself on being an ecological "ark", with tourists often visiting to benefit from the integration of the community within a vast bushland, and enjoying walking through this bush and encountering the natural treasures of Australia. Manyana's identity is formed upon an interconnection between bush and beach, with the people intertwined within. The Manyana community banded together for the sake of one another during the bushfire crisis, to the extent of sacrificing their own food and shelter for the benefit of others. People travelled by boat to Ulladulla when roads were closed to retrieve medication for elderly strangers, others portioning what was left of their food and cooking for those left without a home, opening up their own homes to others. There is absolutely no reason why the residents of Manyana should be placed in another crisis, this time an environmental one. This DA was granted over a decade before these fires, yet remained applicable, despite the recent fires, and neglecting the environmental destruction worldwide and knowledge of the impacts of deforestation that have occurred since then.

As a member of Australia's youth, I call on our planning and environmental legislation to hold paramount the best interests of our local communities, and the future generations of this country. Environmental impacts of these DAs should be reassessed regularly to reflect changing environmental standards and growing concerns in the health of our planet.