



MEDIA RELEASE

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Catherine Hill Bay should not be developed

After more than 40 years working to protect the unique landscape and heritage of Catherine Hill Bay, the National Trust is appalled that mass development is being proposed for the area.

The two townships in the region are being considered for state heritage listing. But the proposal does not effectively protect the landscape, archaeological and townscape heritage values that for generations had been considered vital by government bodies.

Graham Quint, advocacy manager at the National Trust, said the Trust supported the heritage listing but it did not go far enough.

“The area proposed for state heritage listing is more than five times smaller than that proposed by the Trust for national heritage listing in 2008. And absurdly, the immediately surrounding area is simultaneously being marked for significant development,” Mr Quint said.

“The Trust doesn’t oppose development in the area, but the outstanding heritage and landscape must be protected at the same time. If not, the old mine site, important bushland and the headland at Catherine Hill Bay could be lost to development forever.

“For more than 40 years the state government’s own policies, including all planning decisions before 2006, recognised that protecting the area was important.

“But we’re seeing a complete 180 degree back flip by the state government. It’s a completely inconsistent approach to both planning and heritage listing at Catherine Hill Bay.

“Instead of helping to protect the environment for the benefit of future generations, the current plans are about helping big development. It’s deeply concerning.

“More concerning is that the planning policy is not linked to any plans detailing the development’s character or capacity. There’s no framework for future development, landscaping, bushfire mitigation, conservation or public access.

“For development to occur there needs to be development controls and design guidelines that protect the area’s heritage, such as limitations to the height of buildings on the ridgeline. All existing coastal protection measures must be kept to protect the headland and the coastal strip.”

Development in the region has been the subject of the government’s own independent assessment panels whose recommendations to protect the area appear to be being ignored.

The area was also near the very bottom of a government list of sites in the region marked as suitable for development due to its special social, industrial and scenic heritage values, and the area’s biodiversity. It was marked for the highest level of protection.