

Walawaani njindiwan. Budyari mullinawul.
I hope you all had a good journey today. Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I recognise the First Peoples of this nation and their ongoing connection to culture and country. I acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

My name is Cid Mateo. I'm here to speak to you as a new member of our community. I would like to speak about two community priorities on Council's agenda at present; housing and town planning; housing and town planning for all of our community.

I am a resident of Bingi and have started to get involved in my new community. I've joined the Bingi Residents Association and South Coast Health and Sustainability Alliance, and I provide support our free local community newspaper, the Moruya Mail. I have joined the Eurobodalla Natural Heritage Society as I love bushwalking and learning about our precious environment.

Like most of us, I am an immigrant to this region. My connection to the Eurobodalla is a mere 50 years, a speck of time when compared to the 45-60,000 years our Aboriginal ancestors have been here.

I remember trips with the family to local caravan parks in the Eurobodalla as a kid; swimming at the annual NSW Southern Districts Swimming Carnival at the outdoor 50-metre Olympic pools in Batemans Bay and Narooma; and later, as a regular camper in the National Parks around the Eurobodalla and the NSW South Coast.

I like to get involved and support the local community. What a strong community we have.

The depth and breadth of volunteering and unpaid work in the Eurobodalla Shire, at around one in six members of our community, is impressive. This motivates and inspires me. This is an enormous community resource, especially, when we consider that one in three households in the Eurobodalla survive on \$800 a week or less, or in other words, one-third of households in the Eurobodalla survive on less than the equivalent of one full-time worker on the minimum wage.

Turning to my qualifications and work experience, I have tertiary under-graduate and post-graduate qualifications in economics and demography from the Australian National University. I have served the public for around 35 years including in the Australian Treasury and in the Parliamentary Budget Office. I have advised governments in Australia and the Solomon Islands on a range of local, state and national public policy.

Turning to two vital policy issues in the Eurobodalla at present: the Housing Strategy and the Batemans Bay Master Plan. I have studied the history of these projects, and this is what I've found.

First, the Council has presented the Eurobodalla community with two draft policy documents, the draft Housing Strategy in 2024 and the draft Batemans Bay Master Plan in 2025. The draft Housing Strategy appears to have been drafted to support the existing draft Batemans Bay Master Plan. This has 'put the planning cart before the housing horse'. It should be the other way around. The draft Housing Strategy should be the plan to implement Shire-wide housing based on community need. At present, it fails to do this.

Second, the Council has largely ignored the previous housing policy work by the Eurobodalla community. The 2015 community consultations on housing gathered valuable community feedback on housing needs and preferences to inform the development of a Housing Strategy and to improve the twin local issues of housing unaffordability and lack of diversity in housing options. This consultation was part of

ongoing efforts to make sure that the housing supply met the demands of the existing and future residents and visitors to the Shire.

Third, the Council appears to have ignored its own commissioned housing policy research and advice in the development of the draft Housing Strategy and the draft Batemans Bay Master Plan. The Local Housing Strategy Background Report, 20 November 2023, by Judith Stubbs and Associates, sets out comprehensive research and analysis to inform the development of the Eurobodalla Housing Strategy, and outlines the policy context, and the strategies and mechanisms that will be most effective in meeting housing needs in the Eurobodalla.

The way forward

Council, I commend you for your efforts to realign our Housing Strategy and the Batemans Bay Master Plan with the Stubbs Report and the 2015 community consultation. The community has been waiting 10 years for this.

I commend you for the Probity Review into these processes and outcomes. This is a critical step to get our Housing Strategy and town planning back on track. To bring the community along, I recommend you make the Terms of Reference of the Review public, including when the community can expect the Review's report.

The Probity Review must be completed first to inform a revised Housing Strategy. Once the Housing Strategy is finalised, this should in turn inform the Batemans Bay Master Plan and other town plans. This follows best practice planning guidance provided by the NSW Government, and has been followed by our neighbouring councils.

Unfortunately, the Council has not demonstrated the capacity to develop the Eurobodalla Housing Strategy and Batemans Bay Master Plan concurrently and up to standard, and in trying to do so, these plans have deviated from their intended

purpose, which is to diversify housing and meet the housing needs of our community. This is where we are today.

In moving forward, one option the Council could consider is to form a Housing and Planning Steering Committee to guide the next steps, and to finalise and implement the housing strategy and town plans. The Steering Committee would comprise representatives from all housing and planning stakeholders in the community. They would provide expertise, guidance and advice to the Council. The Steering Committee would ensure that all stakeholder perspectives and interests are considered, debated, valued and resolved transparently. The Steering Committee would be tasked with keeping the work on track and on time. The Steering Committee would not favour any stakeholder over another to benefit the whole community, not only a few.

Councillors, our most precious assets, our environment and our people, are in your hands. You have an onerous workload and few resources to work with, to represent, protect and empower our community. On the other side, the Eurobodalla community is fortunate to have a wealth of expertise, public interest and goodwill. Sadly, it continues to be disadvantaged by poor process, policy, visibility and outcomes. The community deserves better than this. Indeed Councillors, you are better than this. Council, lets get this work back on track.

End