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**RE: DA2021/1164 - 521 Barrenjoey Road BILGOLA BEACH NSW 2107**

As a resident of Bilgola Plateau and a member of Canopy Keepers, I strongly oppose this development, and others of this scale and environmental destruction.

Reading through the arborists report, many endemic trees are proposed to be removed - which will create a gap in the otherwise contiguous vegetation, an Endangered Ecological Community (Pittwater and Wagstaffe Spotted Gum Forest). This project seeks to remove 28 trees, 22 of which have high retention value. This impacts the landscape quality and importantly the ecological network of plant and animal species that are becoming increasingly isolated in ever-diminishing islands of natural habitat. The more fragmented these ecological patches become, the harder it is for them to sustain life (especially larger marsupials and birds of prey). Why do you think the koala is now locally extinct when once it roamed this neighborhood? This will happen with other iconic and beloved species such as the Powerful Owl, Gliders, Possums etc.

To quote Consultant Landscape Architect Leigh McGaghey, a seasoned professional in these sorts of evaluations, "from my own professional experience, the reality of ensuring the continuing health of the "trees to be retained" is problematic. The site presents considerable construction challenges and typically these result in negative impacts to existing trees as natural drainage lines are diverted, wind tunnels opened up, soil profiles are compressed or smothered and inadequate construction certification overlooks sub-standard tree protection measures. Many of the trees live in association with other trees and plant species, so whilst some trees maybe retained, the removal of their biologically-connected grove trees, through the destruction of sub-surface mycelium [which nourishes all trees in association] will ultimately lead to the failure of the "retained" trees."

Trees are not just individuals that can be calculated and standardised as 'ecologically beneficial' or ecologically expendable. They are complex living communities that rely on one another for support and nourishment, much like human communities. If we were deciding on which family members to remove from a human community, do you think the 'retained' members would be affected by their loss? This is not new age thinking, it is backed up by the leading scientific research into ecological health and complexity.

Which side of history do you want to be a part of? The development that is destroying our environment for quick profit, or the protection of endemic ecologies that make Pittwater the beautiful place we call home? I really hope you can understand the great loss that will come with the approval of this project.