

13 March 2014

Media Release

EDS campaign to save the Coromandel Peninsula

The Environmental Defence Society has released a highly critical submission on the new Thames Coromandel District Plan and is calling for public support for its campaign for better protection for the Coromandel Peninsula.

“The plan is far too permissive and fails to provide enough protection for the coast, for indigenous biodiversity and for scenic values,” said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

“The Coromandel Peninsula is a national treasure with its long, varied coastline, white sand beaches and forested hills. These all need to be carefully and sensitively managed so that the environment improves rather than deteriorates over time. This plan will determine the future direction of the area for the next 10-20 years. It is crucially important.

“Our analysis shows that the proposed plan lacks strategic focus and would lead to further poor quality development on the Peninsula’s outstanding coastline. This continues an unfortunate historical trend and we say enough is enough.

“The proposed district plan has pretty much ignored the earlier *Coromandel Blueprint* project that proposed limiting urban growth to 3 main settlements: Thames, Whitianga and Whangamata. Instead, it proposes weak policies and rules that effectively open the entire district to development.

“The Council has identified the extent of the coastal environment in the plan but there are few corresponding rules to protect it. This is unacceptable and contrary to the provisions of the Resource Management Act and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

“We argue in our submission that any development should be concentrated in areas already compromised and the balance of the rural and coastal areas protected.

“We are also concerned that the plan will lead to degradation of the Peninsula’s valuable biodiversity. The Council has failed to identify significant ecological areas and the proposed plan includes few provisions to protect existing biodiversity.

“It is time to implement an approach that ensures there is no net loss of biodiversity from the district.

“EDS is committed to putting a major effort into improving the plan. This will involve pursuing our submission through a lengthy hearings process and possible Environment Court appeals. We expect that our concerns will resonate broadly with local residents and ratepayers,” Mr Taylor concluded.

EDS is calling on the public to support its campaign to Save the Coromandel by making donations to the Coromandel Plan Project on the Society’s website www.eds.org.nz

To view the submission, see EDS’s website.