

# **The Role of the Community in Decision-Making for Coastal Planning and Management in New South Wales**

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**Submitted as fulfilment of the MA (Honours) Degree**

**February 2002**



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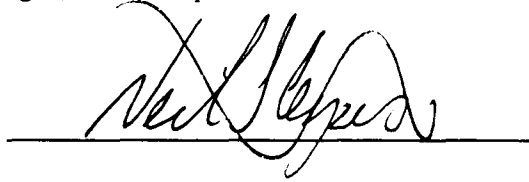
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This work has been submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Masters (Honours), Graduate School of the Environment, Macquarie University. It has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Unless acknowledged, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil S. Lazarow', is written over a horizontal line.

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# Acknowledgments

My supervisors, Prof. Alistair Gilmour and Prof. Frank Talbot from the Graduate School of the Environment, Macquarie University provided considerable guidance and encouragement in the preparation of this thesis.

I'd like to thank all those people in Kempsey and Byron Shire's who helped me with the collection of material for the preparation of this thesis. Special thanks to Councillor Jan Barham from Broken Head, and Roger Ferguson and Linda Falk from Crescent Head.

Special thanks to friends and family for their support and assistance. In particular, I'd like to thank Jeff and Elliott for the nudging and Yiddishkeit and Steve for his advice and technical knowledge.

I am blessed with the opportunity to know both Simon Allen and Charles Littnan, whose everlasting enthusiasm, moral support, kindness and friendship will be with me for all my days.

To my family and to my family and at Serendipity – thanks for being you.

# Synopsis

*Everybody wants access to the coast. The NSW coast is where people want to live, do business, create development and where people want to recreate (Holliday 1998).*

This thesis is about coastal management in NSW, Australia. Specifically, it's a study of the role that individuals and community groups have in the decision-making process for issues affecting the coastal zone and its management. The current international benchmark for coastal management is the concept of "*integrated coastal management (ICM)*" (Cicin-Sain and Knecht, 1998). This implies a particular "*focus on the interactions between the various activities and resource demands that occur within the coastal zone and between coastal zone activities in other regions (OECD 1993).*" Stewardship, that is, a sense of public ownership, responsibility and involvement in decision-making of natural resources and the manner in which they are utilised or protected, is a key component of ICM today and for the future.

In this thesis, I argue that the current planning and management system for coastal management in New South Wales is not adequately equipped to monitor and evaluate public involvement / participation in the development and review of coastal management policies and programs. The current system, although responding to change, is off-track and there is a grave danger that a cynical and badly consulted public will lose interest in the management and protection of this precious resource. I will present a case that argues for the development of a model that monitors and evaluates public participation in coastal planning and management policies and programs, and recommend that it becomes imbedded within the New South Wales Coastal Policy as a tool that can be used by individuals, community groups and government to more effectively manage our coasts.

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