

Jervis Bay history has contributed to modern 'paper estates'

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Photo: Beautiful scene of ocean waves on the beach at Green Patch in Jervis Bay NSW 2012 (ABC News: Mark Moore)

A local historian says the Shoalhaven's ongoing issues with paper estates stem from old plans to build a major city around Jervis Bay.

Bridget Sant has written a book about the moves to establish a major port city at Jervis Bay, which would act as a port for Canberra and would rival Sydney.

The port relied on a rail line being built to the area, but it was never constructed because of the outbreak of World War One and the Great Depression.

Ms Sant says during this time, development plans for housing around the bay were drawn up and large tracts of land were purchased.

"Henry Halloran bought up huge amounts of land around the bay and drew plans for two major cities," she said.

"But because Canberra was delayed, the railways didn't get built and without the railways the port didn't get built and without the port, Henry's cities didn't get built, they remained as paper estates."

Ms Sant says some of the plans for areas known as St Vincents City and Pacific City are the basis of some of the Bay's modern day problems with paper estates.

"Pacific City in 1915 and a bit later in 1917 St Vincents City on the north side of the bay," she said.

"St Vincents City was going to be huge, it had its own university, its own industrial area with canals and all sorts of infrastructure.

"It even had 21 railway stations."