

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Council Planning Reform.

The way local government deals with Rezoning Applications, particularly regarding proposed Lifestyle holdings, has been subject to complications and lengthy delays since the inception of the NSW Department of Planning's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) Review Panel.

The LEP Review Panel was established in February 2006 in an attempt to streamline LEP processing in Sydney and to ensure a consistent approach to rezoning applications across the State. All rezoning applications must be reviewed by this panel, and any objections from relevant government agencies must be resolved beforehand.

Complications and delays have stemmed from addressing objections raised by agencies such as the Dept. of Primary Industries and the Catchment Management Authority regarding land use issues. In our case, various government agencies have effectively moved the goalposts after originally agreeing to the provisions of the LEP 2006.

Council Staff have tried to resolve their frustrations with these agencies, but they have continued to undermine the application of local standards outlined in our LEP and Local Area Plans. This increases the complexity of development and introduces further uncertainty to both property owners and developers in relation to the likely success of rezoning applications and development proposals.

Following representations to the NSW Department of Planning, they have notified Council that we need to undertake additional strategic planning work in the Transition Zones 9 (a) and amend Local Area Plans accordingly. They have allocated a grant of \$40,000 for this purpose.

This work will identify further constraints to development in these areas and it is very likely that removal of some properties from the 9(a) Transition Zone will occur. Identified properties will be rezoned back to the Rural 1 (a) Zone, thereby removing subdivision potential. This process will have major ramifications for affected landholders, but at the present time the situation is unclear.

When the likely constraints have been identified and mapped, Council will inform all landholders currently in the 9(a) Transition Zones before holding a series of information workshops in all the Towns and Villages to consult with the community about the proposed changes within the Transition Zones. These workshops will also be advertised in this newspaper.

Use of Council Depot for Heavy Vehicle Inspections.

For approximately 20 years Council has had an arrangement with the RTA to utilise the maintenance pit at Council's Depot to carry out Heavy Vehicle Inspections as a prerequisite for Heavy Vehicle registration.

Staff recently received correspondence from the RTA stating that from January 2007 the RTA would not use the Depot as it was no longer suitable for Heavy Vehicle Inspections. Prior to this correspondence being received, the only time that the RTA had ever raised any issues with Council regarding the depot inspection site was in 2001 when they advised they would be carrying out Safety Inspections.

Council has received no further correspondence regarding the matter, and the RTA has not indicated any specific safety concerns so we are at a loss to explain the rationale for this decision.

The only means that local heavy vehicle operators now have to register their vehicles is by travelling to the RTA Inspection Stations at Gloucester (limited basis) or Carrington. Council will try to resolve the issues with the RTA and inform our Local Member that this announcement is detrimental to our community.

28 March 2007