



Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan to go on exhibition

The NSW Department of Planning has approved the exhibition of Wingecarribee Shire Council's new draft local environmental plan.

Wingecarribee Shire General Manager, Mike Hyde said the LEP is based on the council's strategic plan, *Wingecarribee Our Future*, which was developed after extensive public consultation.

"We are now looking forward to engaging the community once again to collect their thoughts on the draft plan and I urge the local community to participate in the process," he said.

"This plan belongs to the people of Wingecarribee Shire, so it is imperative they have input, because it becomes the roadmap for future development in the shire and whatever is put in place now has important implications down the track."

Mr Hyde said the LEP's preparation had received \$230,000 in funding from the NSW Government's planning reform fund.

Department of Planning Rural and Regional Planning Executive Director Richard Pearson said the Department and council had worked closely together to prepare the LEP for exhibition.

Mr Pearson said Wingecarribee should be congratulated for being the first regional council to exhibit a new council-wide plan using the standard LEP format.

"The standard LEP format, which came into effect in March 2006, creates a common structure and language for all new council-wide LEPs while continuing to allow councils to set local planning policies," he said.

"The format means that new LEPs are easier for residents, councils and businesses to use and understand."

Mr Pearson said the LEP's exhibition would dovetail with the exhibition until December 7 of the NSW Government's Sydney-Canberra Corridor Strategy.

"The Sydney-Canberra Corridor Strategy sets the broad planning framework for the Wingecarribee area, while the LEP is a statutory planning document covering site-specific issues including zoning, rural land protection and employment opportunities.

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“It is helpful to have them on exhibition at a similar time so people can have their say about the long-term planning of the Wingecarribee area.”

Key features of the draft plan include:

- Protection for drinking water catchments which make up 90% of the rural area while still allowing rural activities where appropriate.
- Identification of core commercial areas in Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale as well as in the smaller towns and villages.
- The development of a significant employment zone that seeks to maximise the benefits from the Port Kembla Port expansion and the proximity of the Shire to the Sydney Metropolitan area with the rezoning of an additional 600ha of employment lands for the Wingecarribee Enterprise Zone.
- Opportunities for housing both in new release areas and within existing urban areas, ensuring future housing supply and choice
- Protection of the rural landscapes that give the Southern Highlands a distinctive character

Because the exhibition of the LEP will fall over the Christmas period, Council intends to extend the exhibition period from the statutory 28 days to around 66 calendar days.

It will be on exhibition from Wednesday 28 November 2007 until Friday 1 February 2008.

There will be a static exhibition available during office hours at the Civic Centre in Moss Vale for the duration of the exhibition period. During the period 10 – 17 December 2007 and then 14 – 24 January 2008, there will be a total of 11 travelling exhibits in various towns and villages across the Shire. These exhibits will be staffed by council officers who will be able to answer questions, as well as explain the implications and intentions of the draft plan. Each town and village exhibition will be open from 11am – 7.30pm

The full details of the exhibition program will be distributed when final bookings of community halls are confirmed.

On Wednesday 28 November and Thursday 29 November, a two page spread will appear in the Southern Highlands News and the Highlands Post. As soon as possible after the 28 November, all households will receive a special edition of the Wingecarribee Today newsletter which will be the same information as appeared in the newspapers.

Staff will also be available to attend various meetings of community and industry groups as necessary.

As part of this process the plan reclassifies some community lands. An additional program of consultation is required for this process. From 5 February 2008 until 20 February 2008 there will be a series of nine public hearings, conducted by an independent consultant, to allow public comment on the proposed reclassification of certain community lands under the LEP. The full details will appear in the Southern Highland News and Wingecarribee Today when final program is finalised.

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