PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF WOLLONGONG FINALISED

A robust new planning regime for Wollongong will deliver new housing and employment lands supply to meet the city’s ongoing growth and development needs, while protecting the area’s valuable environmental assets.

NSW Planning Minister, Tony Kelly, said the Wollongong council-wide local environmental plan (LEP) was drafted in less than two years by the Council’s administrators and the Department.

“This plan will deliver key objectives of the Illawarra Regional Strategy in relation to dwelling and employment targets,” the Minister said.

Member for Wollongong, Noreen Hay, said the Illawarra’s population is set to increase by more than 47,000 by 2031 and the majority of this growth will be located in the Wollongong council area.

“A contemporary planning framework is a key ingredient to ensure necessary growth occurs in a sustainable manner,” Ms Hay said.

This LEP will provide up-to-date planning controls replacing the current controls which date back 20 years, delivering improved clarity and transparency regarding what development is allowable.

Under the plan:

- Around 130 hectares of land has been zoned for industrial, tourism and business purposes at the former power station site at Tallawarra;
- The regional strategy housing targets will be delivered by zoning the Bulli Brickworks site to allow for around 450 residential dwellings, as well as a further 700 dwellings at Tallawarra;
- Valuable natural environments and waterways have been protected in accordance with the Illawarra Escarpment Strategic Management Plan – endorsed by the former Minister – and with Council’s Illawarra Escarpment Land Use Review Strategy.

Mr Kelly said the LEP had been prepared based on the Government’s standard LEP template which seeks to clarify and simplify State planning controls.

“The standard template provides a consistent framework for the layout, zone names and definitions in new council-wide LEPs across the State, making them easier to implement and to understand,” the Minister said.

“At the same time, councils still have the flexibility to incorporate local planning strategies and address issues specific to the local area.”

Following community consultation, Council had made a number of amendments. They include:
• Reduction in amount of residential zoning at the Tallawarra site to maintain an adequate buffer to the power station and to provide more public open space fronting Lake Illawarra;
• A reduction in allowable building heights in the low and medium density residential zones by two and five metres respectively, better integrating with existing local character;
• Replacement of proposed medium density residential zones with low density zones at Woonona and Gwynneville and in flood affected areas; and
• The zoning of land within the Hacking River catchment at Helensburgh and Otford E3 Environmental Management, rather than the original proposed E2 Environmental Conservation, which will maintain the land's existing development potential.

Further land use changes in the Helensburgh and Otford area will only occur if Council pursues a planning proposal to implement the recommendations of Council’s Review of the 7(d) Hacking River Environmental Protection Zone.

The West Dapto urban release area is also covered by a separate LEP and is expected to be finalised shortly.