Thursday, 25 March 2010

**Draft Gundagai local environmental plan ready for public exhibition**

Gundagai Shire Council has been given the green light to publicly exhibit its draft comprehensive local environmental plan (LEP), Council and the NSW Department of Planning have announced.

The draft plan has been prepared by Council, with significant input from various State Government agencies along with around $175,000 in financial assistance from the Department of Planning.

This is the first time council-wide planning controls have been prepared for the Gundagai local government area, and represents a significant achievement for Council and the community.

The Department’s Deputy Director-General, Tom Gellibrand, said that the LEP had been prepared using the 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,” Mr Gellibrand said.

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

Mayor for Gundagai Shire Council, Cr Len Tozer, said that the draft plan will allow for future developments to occur in a manner that safeguards the Shire’s important agriculture, environmental and natural resource assets, while providing certainty and direction for the residents and developers.

“The LEP will provide a tool to assist Council in continuing the positive growth that has been occurring in the Shire, in a co-ordinated way,” Cr Tozer said.

“The Council is very aware of its responsibilities in protecting valuable agricultural lands, preserving our many heritage and environmental features whilst allowing development and tourism growth to expand the Shire’s economic base.
“It is an exciting time for our community to have our first comprehensive draft LEP on public display.”

The proposed new residential zones for the Gundagai township largely reflect existing urban development, whilst also providing additional opportunities for growth to meet the ongoing needs of the Shire.

The Dog on the Tuckerbox is one of a number of items proposed to be formally listed as a local heritage item, in recognition of its iconic significance to the Shire.

This will ensure its heritage values are a key consideration in the assessment of any development application on nearby land that might impact on the item.

The Dog on the Tuckerbox is proposed to be located within a larger tourist zone which also provides for activities such as tourist and visitor accommodation and a range of other related uses.

Cr Tozer said that the public exhibition, which will commence shortly, is an important step in the process that provides residents the opportunity to voice their feedback on all aspects of the draft plan and ensure that it reflects the aspirations of the community into the future.

The Mayor encouraged the whole community, both individuals and groups, to consider the draft and make a submission on any relevant matter.

Mr Gellibrand commended Gundagai Shire Council on the progress it has made on the draft plan to date, and the timely manner in which it had been prepared.

For media inquiries regarding local planning provisions, please contact Graeme Tickner, General Manager of Gundagai Shire Council, on (02) 6944 0200.

For media inquiries regarding the standard LEP template, please contact Tahria Sheather at the NSW Department of Planning on (02) 9228 6128 or 0429 153 139.