Approved Town Centres LEP in line with Ku-ring-gai dwelling targets

The NSW Government has approved the Ku-ring-gai Town Centres Local Environmental Plan (LEP) that will deliver future growth close to existing infrastructure and services and revitalise the area’s key town centres.

Planning Minister Tony Kelly said finalisation of the LEP followed extensive consultation by both the council and the State Government and would assist Council in meeting its Metropolitan Strategy dwelling targets.

“The Metropolitan Strategy identifies that Sydney needs approximately 640,000 new homes by the year 2031,” Mr Kelly said.

“To play its part in meeting this need, in 2006 Ku-ring-gai Council agreed to meet a housing target of 10,000 new dwellings, which is substantially less than the average figure of almost 15,000 across all Sydney councils.

“This target takes into account Ku-ring-gai’s existing character as well as its future growth capacity, the vast majority of which has been identified around existing centres.

“As a result, this new LEP has an important part to play in not only achieving Ku-ring-gai’s overall dwelling target but also significantly improving public amenity through the revitalisation of local town centres.

“Placing the majority of new dwellings in existing town centres, close to public transport and other services, also ensures that the remainder of the LGA will retain its existing character with no additional development potential.

“In fact, the LEP applies to less than six per cent of the overall LGA.”

Mr Kelly said that stringent heritage and amenity provisions had also been incorporated in the LEP to ensure appropriate levels of protection for the area’s valuable natural and built heritage, as well as the local environment.

“Preparation of the LEP has involved considerable heritage review and is based on studies that have been undertaken over the past decade.

“This has led to the inclusion of additional individual heritage items as well as 14 new heritage conservation areas that did not previously exist in any Ku-ring-gai planning instrument.
“The heritage provisions in the LEP will protect these sites and areas and will ensure that the approval of any new development in the vicinity is only granted following careful consideration of the area’s heritage significance.

“And in terms of environmental protection, the new LEP also reinforces the existing legislative protections covering all the areas of Blue Gum High Forest and Ironbark-Turpentine Forest in the LGA.”

Last year, the Department of Planning commissioned an independent review of the dwelling yields in Ku-ring-gai which showed that the delivery of new dwellings remained consistent with the target of 10,000 new dwellings as set out in the Metropolitan Strategy.

The study showed that the Town Centres LEP will likely deliver around 4,500 new dwellings over the next 20 years on top of the 5,000 already approved by Council since 2005, with an additional 600 dwellings associated with developments outside the town centres area.

“The role of government in providing for future housing need is to provide the strategic and planning context for development to occur,” Mr Kelly said.

“The Metropolitan Strategy targets deliver the appropriate strategic context and this new LEP is the local planning mechanism that will allow that goal to be achieved.

“Within this broad framework, Council will also be putting in place a new development control plan, including detailed design guidelines to ensure new development interacts appropriately with other existing and proposed development.

“The LEP itself also addresses this issue through the use of graduated zonings so that, in general, high and low density zones are buffered by medium density development in between.

“However, the decision to proceed with actual development rests both with the developers, based on their assessment of demand and financial viability, and with Ku-ring-gai Council, which would need to approve new development applications.

“Ultimately, construction of new dwellings in the area will be driven by local demand.”

The Ku-ring-gai Town Centres LEP can be found at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au