

Tuesday, 25 May 2010

Department of Planning board identifies Clarence priorities during Grafton visit

The NSW Department of Planning's Director-General today outlined some of the planning priorities for the Clarence Valley area during an executive meeting held in Grafton.

The Department's planning executive board – including its four most senior employees – held its monthly meeting at Grafton.

The meeting is part of a push by the Department to hold more of its board meetings in regional areas, instead of their traditional Sydney location.

The Department's Director-General Sam Haddad said Grafton was an appropriate location for a planning executive meeting, considering its important role in the Mid North Coast regional strategy released last year.

It is also the location of one of eight Departmental offices outside of Sydney.

“Along with Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Taree, Grafton has been identified by the Department as a major regional centre for the Mid North Coast,” Mr Haddad said.

“As such, the executive board was keen to come to Grafton to meet with the local council but also discuss Statewide planning issues.”

The board also met with representatives from Clarence Valley and other regional councils in Coffs Harbour today, as well as staff from the Department's Grafton office.

Mr Haddad said some of the planning priorities in the Clarence Valley area were:

- Completion of the new council-wide local environmental plan (LEP) – the LEP has been exhibited and Council is currently reviewing submissions. The new LEP will replace six previous plans (Grafton, Ulmarra, Nymboida, Copmanhurst, Maclean and part of Richmond River) following the amalgamation of councils.
- Finalisation of the Junction Hill land release LEP which will provide for approximately 750 new residential lots.
- Implementation of the recently released urban areas of West Yamba and Clarenza with capacity for 1200 and 750 lots respectively. Council is currently working on detailed development control plans (DCPs) for each site.
- Developing a structure plan for Gulmarrad/Townsend to enable future urban land release consistent with the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy. The outcome is intended to provide a cohesive plan to integrate this release area as part of the major town of Maclean.
- Upgrading stormwater infrastructure in Grafton, Maclean and Yamba to support future urban development as part of a \$1.07 million interest-free State Government loan to the council.

In addition to the Director-General, attendees at the Department's executive board meeting today are:

- Ian Reynolds – Deputy Director-General, Strategies and Land Release
- Tom Gellibrand – Deputy Director-General, Plan Making and Urban Renewal
- Richard Pearson – Deputy Director-General, Development Assessment and Systems Performance
- Liam McKay – Director, Community and Stakeholder Engagement.

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NOTE: Members of the Department's Executive Board will be available for interview at 1:30pm this afternoon outside the Department's Grafton regional office, located at 76 Victoria Street, Grafton.