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Department releases draft North Wyong structure plan

A proposed green corridor and biodiversity links, along with new employment and housing release areas, are the focus of a long-term blueprint for the north-east of Wyong Shire that has been released for public comment.

The draft North Wyong Shire Structure Plan was unveiled today and the Department of Planning's Deputy Director-General Tom Gellibrand said the community was being given six weeks to have their say.

The draft plan was prepared for the Department of Planning by consultants Cité Urban Strategies and Worley Parsons and will guide future land releases until at least 2031.

The plan covers 11,500 hectares of land – around 15 per cent of the Wyong local government area and 7 per cent of the entire Central Coast region. The study area includes Warnervale, Bushells Ridge, Summerland Point and the area around Lake Munmorah.

"This plan will provide an important blueprint for future development of this part of the Central Coast and will give us a clear direction for planning to 2031 and beyond," Mr Gellibrand said.

Mr Gellibrand said almost 50 per cent of the study area, or around 5,500 hectares, could be part of a proposed green corridor and biodiversity links, including a major east-west green corridor between the Watagan Mountains in the west and the Pacific Ocean in the east.

"Wyong Shire is rich in biodiversity, including many waterways and bushland areas, some of which are home to threatened species," Mr Gellibrand said.

"Wyong Shire already has significant areas set aside as national parks and State conservation areas, but some of these have been isolated by previous development and infrastructure corridors.

"The proposed green corridor includes a mix of high conservation areas and disturbed areas where links between pockets of bushland could be created in the future, both to improve connectivity and create habitat for native wildlife."

While the majority of the proposed green corridor will remain in private ownership, these areas are expected to become attractive to developers wanting to buy land to offset the future impacts of development within the identified development precincts.

Under the draft structure plan, a total of 1,900ha would be developed for residential use and employment lands across 21 separate precincts. There would be potential for around 17,800 new homes, including 12,600 homes in new release areas.

“We need to provide this housing for the Central Coast, which like all other parts of coastal NSW is experiencing a growing population,” Mr Gellibrand said.

“The structure plan will allow us to plan for this housing to ease local affordability issues in a co-ordinated and sustainable way.”

The draft structure plan also identifies the potential to create between 12,100 and 17,000 new jobs. Providing jobs closer to home is an important goal of the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

“Around 6,000 of these jobs will be provided within the Wyong employment zone, around 1,200 will be in Warnervale town centre and up to 9,800 are new jobs identified by the structure plan,” Mr Gellibrand said.

Almost all of the Central Coast’s future greenfield residential development sites are located within the boundaries of this draft plan, which will be used by Wyong Shire Council to update its local environmental plan (LEP) in the future.

The relevant planning authority, which in most cases will be Wyong Shire Council, will be able to seek to rezone areas identified by the draft plan for potential development as the demand arises.

Mr Gellibrand said the draft plan would also be used by infrastructure agencies when planning for upgrades and new facilities to service the expected growing population.

The recently released draft Central Coast Regional Transport Strategy was a good example of how agencies were working together to plan for future infrastructure and services in the structure plan area, Mr Gellibrand said.

“The draft Regional Transport Strategy proposes a number of measures which will support development in the structure plan area,” he said.

“These include the proposed North Warnervale station and transport interchange, road improvements, commuter car parks at Tuggerah and Wyong and developing a North Wyong Bus Servicing Strategy,” Mr Gellibrand said.

“The draft plan also specifically supports other proposed infrastructure for Warnervale, including a permanent GP super clinic in the Warnervale town centre and emergency service upgrades.

“Some of the new infrastructure and services for these areas will be paid for by developers through local and State infrastructure contributions.

Mr Gellibrand said in the short to medium term, development would be concentrated around the Warnervale town centre and the Wyong employment zone. The precincts south of the Warnervale town centre are expected to be the next released.

The exhibition of the draft structure plan is a key outcome of the Central Coast regional strategy.

“I encourage interested members of the public to lodge a submission providing feedback during the exhibition period,” Mr Gellibrand said.

The Department of Planning is also inviting the public to two community information sessions on the following dates:

- Saturday 20 November 2010 (10am to 12pm), Warnervale Community Hall, Virginia Rd, Warnervale; and
- Monday 22 November 2010 (3pm to 5pm) at Wyong Shire Council, Hely St, Wyong.

Details of exhibition venues, along with the draft structure plan and associated documents, are available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au

Submissions need to be lodged by 5pm on 22 December 2010.

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