New planning controls to promote regional growth for the Liverpool Plains

New planning controls for the Liverpool Plains, which balance the need for regional growth and additional housing with the protection of the region’s environmental, rural and heritage values, have been approved by the NSW Government.

The Liverpool Plains Local Environmental Plan (LEP) consolidates four existing LEPs - Parry, Quirindi, Murrurundi and Gunnedah LEPs - which have been operating in the Liverpool Plains Shire since the council was formed by amalgamations and boundary adjustments in 2004.

The council-wide LEP was approved by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, under delegation from the Minister, and reflects close co-operation between the department and Liverpool Plains Council.

The department provided $90,000 in funding through the Planning Reform Fund, and $48,600 through the LEP Acceleration Fund, to support the preparation of the Liverpool Plains LEP.

The department’s Deputy Director General Tom Gellibrand said the LEP had rezoned land for an additional 500 homes to the east and north of Quirindi. The existing village zone in Werris Creek and Quirindi has also been replaced with a range of urban zones to reflect the diversity of housing types within the two villages.

“This plan reflects the NSW Government’s aim to encourage well-planned growth in regional areas and to encourage new housing in areas anticipated to experience increasing growth,” Mr Gellibrand said.

“While promoting some new housing, the LEP also recognises the continued importance of primary production and agriculture on the Liverpool Plains by establishing a minimum primary production lot size of 200 hectares across the local government area.”

Mr Gellibrand said the department had supported Council’s decision not to proceed at this time with a large lot residential release area south of Werris Creek, which could create land use conflict with the nearby Werris Creek coal mine and a potential endangered ecological community.

“Similarly, land between Quirindi and Wallabadah will be zoned as primary production, rather than large lot residential, to help prevent land use conflict with surrounding rural lands,” he said.
Liverpool Plains Shire Council general manager Robert Hunt welcomed the approval of the LEP.

“It is pleasing to finally have a single plan for the Shire after many of years of developing the LEP and extensive consultation with the community and various government agencies,” Mr Hunt said.

“I would like to thank council staff, consultants and Department of Planning and Infrastructure staff for their contribution to the development of this plan, which will guide growth within the Shire for at least the next five years.”

The Liverpool Plains LEP also:

- Lists an additional 93 items on Council’s local heritage schedule, including the Quirindi War Memorial Clock Tower and the Royal Theatre in Quirindi;
- Includes known environmentally sensitive lands in appropriate environmental zones, to protect the sites from inappropriate development; and
- Updates Council’s flood planning controls to be consistent with NSW Floodplain Development Manual 2005.

Mr Gellibrand said the LEP reflected the extensive strategic planning work undertaken by Council and was consistent with the Liverpool Plains Growth Management Strategy, endorsed by the department in 2009.

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